

THE
HISTORY
OF
LORD BELFORD,
AND
Miss SOPHIA WOODLEY.
IN A
SERIES OF LETTERS.

VOL. III.

—“ blessings ever wait on virtuous Deeds,
“ And though a late, a *sure* Reward succeeds.”

L O N D O N:

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THE
HISTORY
OF
LORD BELFORD,
AND
Miss SOPHIA WOODLEY.

LETTER XXIII.

Miss Sophia Woodley, to Miss Harriet Granby,
at Paris.

South Park, June 21.

I Have heard of witches, spells,
and magic charms, but never, my Harriet, could they, with the whole force of their enchantment, work a more supernatural business (no not even the little cunning

ning *familiar* at your *elbow*—for surely you seem, in some of your prognostications, to have an *intercourse* of that kind)—never, I repeat, could even the sage *Alquise* of distinguished memory, in the annals of Don Quixote, bring to pass a more astonishing event than I have to relate. — Would you believe it possible that there is, at this very moment, under the same roof with your Sophia, and in the *next apartment* to her's, the very identical person whom you—but I will not anticipate—take the leading particulars of this event, which are as follow :

Yesterday afternoon my adored benefactress being as usual indisposed and fatigued with the heat of the day, said she would try to get a little repose: I left her for
that

that purpose, — and saw her laid on her couch. — I then strolled into the gardens, with my lute in my hand, in order to amuse myself for an hour in the coolest shade I could find. At length I wandered into my favourite wilderness in the remotest part of the wood. It is, I think, of all spots, the most solitary and beautiful I ever beheld. A small serpentine path, cut through a shade, almost impervious to the sun's rays, leads to a lonely little hermitage, which has been erected, with the utmost beauty of simplicity, by the direction of lady Worthy.

This simple dwelling is constructed solely of craggy stones, and now covered with thickest ivy: — a bank of the greenest moss is its chiefest

ornament within, and its only seat. It seems even the sweet abode of *silence* herself, except when the awful solitude is interrupted by the soft cooing of the moaning stock-doves and turtles, who build in the neighbouring trees, and who seem to claim this sequestered spot as their *own*. — The gentle murmurs of a bubbling brook, almost close to the simple edifice, which by many a winding path is overgrown with the branching eglantine and sweet briar, complete the description.

Being now arrived at this lonely spot, I seated myself on the mossy bench, and soon fell into one of my melancholy *reveries*. — I leave you to guess the subject of my contemplations ; — but I will be so honest

honest however to confess, that, at that very moment, I was wishing a certain *nobleman* had been in as humble a station as myself; when in the midst of my cogitations, I thought I heard the sound of footsteps through the winding path:—I however was not alarmed: as I was convinced this sweet spot, being in the gardens, could not be accessible to strangers;—and taking up my lute, began to tune it.—After playing a melancholy air or two, I began singing to my little soft instrument the favourite air, beginning thus:

“What med’cine can banish the bosom’s
keen smart,

“What Lethe can heal my sad pain?”

After singing a few moments
(you see my Harriet I tell you *all*)

A 4

I began

I began the following sweet song of Bach's—but little—little could I imagine how applicable it was at the time.

“ In this shady, sweet retreat,
“ I've been wishing for my love—
“ Hark ! I hear his welcome feet ! ”

I was just got to that line, when, on looking up, who should appear but Lord Belford, at the door of the Hermitage—guess my amazement, for I cannot tell it you; it is beyond all description.—Down fell my lute—and violently shrieking, I fainted.

How long I remained in my fainting fit, I cannot tell you. I only remember, that when I was coming out of it, and just recovering my senses, I found myself locked fast in the arms of Lord
Belford

Belford—who was straining me to his bosom—nay more, Harriet—he was imprinting a hundred kisses on my cheek—and softly whispering to my soul—“ Sophia—my “ angel—look up—it is thy Belford.—I was to blame to take “ such softness unprepared — O “ look up, my angel.”

“ *His* angel! *his* Sophia!—*my* “ Belford!”—what on earth could he mean?

To add to my excessive confusion, I found, on coming to my senses, my head forsooth *reclining* on his lordship's bosom—my hands—my *passive* hands, *pressed* in his.

On finding what my situation was, I (as you will suppose) struggled most vehemently to get from his encircling arms, which, however,

ever, I had no occasion to do.—Ah, my Harriet! what a rare, what a truly respectable character is that of a *modest*, a *delicate-minded* man!

The instant of my recovery, as if *recollecting* himself, he seated me on the mossy bench—he relinquished his hold—and sitting down, at a respectable distance, with visible confusion in his countenance, he exclaimed—“ Good God; Miss Woodley!—for convinced I am, “ you *are* Miss Woodley—how “ astonished am I, to find you here “ at South-park!—It surpasses all “ conception—

“ And gracious heaven!” interrupted I, in a tremor no words can paint, “ is it possible that I see “ Lord Belford in this sequestered “ spot?—How wonderful is this! “ —An

“ —An appearance so sudden and
 “ unlooked for, amazes me so, that
 “ I am lost in confusion.”

In short, I knew not what I said
 —my very *brain* seemed affected.

He here pressed my hand—
 which, to say truth, I had seemed
 quite to *abandon* to him—indeed I
 knew not what I did.—Yes, my
 dear—he pressed my hand to his
 lips, as if by an involuntary impulse,
 and gave me a look of inexpressible
 softness, which pierced my soul.—
 We were now both silent for some
 minutes, and surely, to a bye-stand-
 er, we must have cut a very auk-
 ward and foolish appearance.*

After

* The Editor begs leave to differ from the
 fair writer in this respect; as he really thinks
 it would afford a beautiful subject for painting,
 to take these amiable lovers at this moment,
 with a view of their sequestered Hermitage.

After much hesitation, and apparent confusion, his lordship begged ten thousand pardons for having *inadvertently* been the cause of alarming me.—“ Alas !” said he, in a soft accent, “ how was it possible I should know Miss Woodley, was at South-park — or — that I should find her in this solitude ?—I have been, madam, on a little tour through England, and called here upon my good friend, Lady Worthy—when the servants having informed me that she was just laid down to sleep—and as I by no means would have her disturbed upon my account, I strolled into the gardens, and insensibly wandered into this sweet recess—but little did I indeed imagine to find *Miss Woodley* here.”

At

At this instant it occurred to me, that, in order to his lordship's not mentioning my *real* name *openly* (which name I was then astonished he had discovered) I thought it most prudent to beg him to call me by the name of Martin. "Indeed, my lord," said I blushing, and in a faltering accent, "my name is Woodley — Sophia Woodley. — Particular circumstances have occurred, on a sad reverse of my fortune, to make me change it to that of Martin — and to have taken refuge in a farm-house—the Elms in Devonshire. — Difficult situations make us, sometimes, obliged to do, *what*, but *for* those situations, would never have entered one's head ;—and it was on such

" an

“an occasion I was obliged to
change my name.”

His lordship bowed with the greatest respect, as assenting to the hint I had given him, of being called by the name of Martin. At this moment, I began sneezing most violently — and casting my eyes on my handkerchief on my neck, found it had been very plentifully sprinkled with water, as well as my face, by his lordship in my late fainting.

“Good heaven!” said he, with a tenderness no words can express,
“from my aukward efforts to re-
“cover you, I fear the water I took
“from yonder brook, and of which
“perhaps I was too lavish, has given
“you cold:—I will retire,” said this most delicate of men, “whilst
“you

“ you change your handkerchief.”

I felt for my cambrick one, which I thought I had in my pocket, but found it not. — How tender was Lord Belford’s concern, lest I had taken cold ! “ I am the cause of this !” he cried, “ and if you should get cold, I should blame myself exceedingly.—Pray, madam, throw this cambrick handkerchief round your neck (taking a clean one unfolded from his pocket) I will *retire* whilst you do so.” — He arose and walked out of the Hermitage.

Harriet, I *took* his handkerchief, since which I blame myself excessively : very *forward* in me—was it not ?

When I had removed my *wet* handkerchief (which indeed was drenched

drenched in water). I wrapped up myself in that of his lordship's. I already found I had taken a cold, which nothing but the late violent agitation of my spirits could have hindered me from perceiving sooner. —I then looked at my watch, and finding it was the hour of Lady Worthy's tea, I arose.

His lordship I found standing at some little distance from the Hermitage, in a musing posture, as if lost in thought. —He started at my approach (why did he start?) —We walked slowly to the house—or rather I tottered thither, for I was scarce able to stand.—His lordship appeared confused—but tender and respectful.

When we arrived at the house, he was introduced to Lady Worthy.

—I saw

—I saw not their meeting, for I went to my apartment to change my dress, and when tea was ready, I made my appearance.

Lady Worthy seemed delighted with her guest.—who behaved to me, with an air so respectful and amiable, that no one present would have *imagined* the late scene that had passed between us.

At breakfast, this morning, unperceived by Lady Worthy, his Lordship asked how my *cold* was *now*?—I blushed and told him I hoped it was better.—He seemed delighted.

Lady Worthy insists on Lord Belford's spending some weeks at South Park—but I wish he may not.—Indeed, my Harriet, he is too much, too formidable for my
peace:

peace :—Nothing on earth I dread so much as being entangled in an *hopeless* passion—for *hopeless mine* must be. — I am not, my dear, *quite* of your opinion, with regard to encouraging *hope*, in *love-matters* : I see my sweet friend's design in recommending it so warmly to her Sophia ;—but I have not the *presumption* to dare to—I will not, however, dwell on the theme, but to say I hope Lord Belford and I shall have no more *tête-à-têtes* ;—as my confusion, I fear, if we *have*, will *discover* what I would sooner die than reveal. Luckily this day we had a large party to dinner, so that I had enough on my hands, since I always preside, on these occasions, as Lady Worthy's substitute.

tute. Adieu, my admirable Harriet,

Ever, ever your's,
SOPHIA WOODLEY.

I have, I now find, a most miserable cold, attended with a *sore-throat*, owing, I suppose, to the *cold water scene* in the Hermitage.

L E T T E R XXIV.

Lord Belford, to Henry Villars, Esq.

South Park, June 21.

IN the hope that this may reach my friend, before his departure from England, I dispatch a few lines to say it is necessary I should know, as *soon* as he possibly can inform me, if Julia is in *being*—

or

or is *not* ; if the *latter*, I shall at once, I assure you, offer my hand to Sophia Woodley—for oh, my Villars, an event the most unlooked for—the most amazing, has happened that you can possibly conceive ; the circumstances of which has rivetted my heart, if possible, more firmly than ever to that love-liest of women.

I have seen the angel, my Villars,—nay—I have had her fainting in my arms—I am now under the same roof ;—and at this moment she is in the *next* apartment to mine.—You look on all this as a dream, perhaps ;—but the seeming improbability of my tale will vanish, when I tell you the following particulars.

I arrived, yesterday, at South-Park,

Park, the seat, as you know, of my respectable friend Lady Worthy, that I might pursue *your advice* of a variety of *fresh scenes* and *company*, to dissipate the *malady* at my *heart*.—Being told, on my arrival, that her ladyship was indisposed, and then sleeping, I desired she might not be disturbed, and asked if any company was in the house (as is usual) but was answered none.

During the hour of my old friend's repose, I strolled into the gardens, the beauties of which are many; their beneficent owner having amply gratified her fine taste in the various groves, &c. with which her house is surrounded. The constant employment for the poor labourers, which so
many

many improvements demand, sufficiently gratifies the refined delight of the admirable woman, in its giving bread to such a number of industrious poor.

I had wandered some time in the gardens, extremely delighted with the various improvements I saw since I was last here, when, being fatigued with heat, I sought a situation more shady ; a wilderness on my right hand presented itself—romantic—and solitary as my *pensive* mind could wish.—The trees, which composed this very rural scene, were so thickly interwoven, it was impossible for even a sunbeam to enter. — It appeared to lead to no one spot in particular, but seemed the abode of sweet solitude.—The squirrels were playing

ing on the boughs of lofty trees, whilst innumerable birds, on the lower shrubs, formed a concert of delightful harmony. I at last, however, descryed a small winding kind of path, and though it was almost overgrown by a profusion of wild myrtles, and other odoriferous shrubs, (which are common to be seen in these parts) I thought it must lead to something. Full of this opinion, I wandered on—when I observed it was terminated by a small, romantic hermitage, overgrown with ivy, and gray moss; through which some old stones gave it a rustic, but pleasing effect.—By the side of this structure ran a bubbling brook over some rough pebbles:—the whole scene was beyond description *picturesque*.

I stood

I stood a moment admiring so delicious a spot, when to my astonishment from this little hermitage, which I had not then entered, I heard, methought, the soft ravishing sounds of a lute:—I started—I listened—I believed myself on *Fairy Ground*.—At length, a female voice, after what Milton calls, “preludiam sweet,” almost rivetted me to the spot, with admiration.

“Such sober certainty of waking bliss,

“I never heard till now.”

“A stream of richest sounds stole on my sense,

“Scylla wept, and chid her barking waves,

“And fell Charibdi’s murmur’d soft applause.”

The words of the songs of this *unseen* enchantress, evidently seemed to flow from a *soul* as deeply affected with the tender passion as my *own*.—Never did I hear such exquisite expression — never did I hear

hear sounds so melting and pathetic.—As Shakespeare's phrase is, on the like occasion,

"They *struck* that breast where love doth hold his *seat*."

You will easily conceive, my friend, how much this delicious spot—the silence—the solitude—still enhanced the novelty of this little Elysium.—At length I advanced to the door of this hermitage—or rather to this grotto of Calypso—desirous of seeing the enchantress herself:—but heavens! who should she be—beauteous as an angel and in a most ravishing undress,—but the divine Sophia Woodley herself!—She looked upon me one moment—then scream—

ed—and fainted.—I caught her in my arms.

O Villars—I was then—at that instant convinced, that there *are* moments worth purchasing with *worlds* !—I held her to my breast in a kind of sacred transport—and imprinted many a tender kiss on her lifeless cheek.—By the help of water from the neighbouring brook, I however brought the loveliest of women to returning sense :—but I again had clasped her in my arms.—She now opened her languid eyes :—her head, my Villars, *unknowing* the happiness she was giving me, resting on my bosom, whilst her fair hands were grasped by mine :—I whispering all this time the softest, tenderest accents

accents to her soul.—At length, being enough *herself* to be perfectly sensible of her situation, she struggled to be freed from my encircling arms—and heavens, how exquisitely lovely did her delicate confusion—her conscious blushes render her!—Imagine our equal astonishment at *such* a meeting!—it is indeed beyond all language to describe.

When we *both* began to be a little *intelligible*, for I assure you *her disorder* was equal to thy Belford's, she informed me she lived with lady Worthy, as her companion.

(Here lord Belford relates the substance of their conversation in the Hermitage, which, as Sophia has before done, we need not re-

peat.—His lordship then proceeds.)

Yes, my Villars, the lovely girl confessed—of what, indeed, I was *convinced*—that Polly Martin is Sophia Woodley.

The hour of tea arriving, this delicious *tête-à-tête* was obliged to end—and we advanced slowly to the house.—O my Villars, she is

“ In gracious mind, in manners, and in person,
“ The perfect model of all *female* beauty.”

Never did I behold such tender timidity without weakness ;—such dignity without pride—or such consummate beauty without affectation.—I am now, my friend, ten thousand times, if possible, more captivated than ever :—and I am much mistaken, that *all* in the gentle bosom of the sweet Sophia,

is

is not so *calm* as it should be :—in short—for I *renounce* all affectation and cold reserve to you—I have reason to think I am *not indifferent* to this most angelic girl. There was something in her manner in the Hermitage, so *inexpressibly* tender,—so confused—so,—I want words to tell you :—and afterwards, on our joining Lady Worthy, the sweet girl betrayed so much tremour and apparent confusion, with a certain softness in her manner whenever she addressed me, that I shall not hesitate a moment, if the unhappy Julia be *no more*, or *engaged*, to make Sophia Woodley *mine* by the strongest—most indissoluble ties.

Lady Worthy, I see, doats on her—which I cannot wonder at.

That good lady presses my stay here for some weeks with great earnestness:—you know her partiality for your Belford:—but lest poor Julia *should* be yet in a situation to receive my hand, I positively will not remain in so *dangerous* a situation, as South Park now is, for worlds, above ten days at the farthest: I will not be so *fool-hardy* to expose myself to the “*hourly shot of her eyes.*”

We have this day had no *tête-à-tête*;—but in every changing attitude—in every situation this lovely woman is excelling.—She received a numerous party of genteel people to dinner; and does the honours of the table with the graces of the first woman of quality in the kingdom.—Her dress was peculiarly

culiarly beautiful—a white lustring adorned with a pale purple trimming—whilst the profusion of her fine hair had no other ornament than a small diamond sprig, the gift of lady Worthy.—After tea, the company adjourned to the music parlour, to hear Miss *Martin*, (by which name she is *always* called) play a concerto on the harpsichord—whilst I, (and here admire my virtue) took a solitary turn in the garden, when I drew from my pocket a small picture of Julia's. — “ Ah ! (said I) poor “ unfortunate ! let me *try* to re- “ collect *thy* sufferings.”—A train of thoughts succeeded—and I was again unhappy.

The company now proposed a dance on the green—when I re-

tired to my apartment pretending I had letters to write.—Such, Villars, are the *resolute* methods by which I try to *see* as little of this sweet girl's enchanting accomplishments as possible;—but my stars, I fear, are *fighting* against me, notwithstanding all my *precautions*—for poor lady Worthy—*unsuspecting* as goodness ever is—on looking tenderly at Sophia (after the company were departed, and we were alone) asked her with the fondness of a parent, “My dear, are you not “well? you appear melancholy.”—There was indeed a langour in her fine eyes, my Villars, which made me think the same.—She continued; “Sophy, my lord, is strangely pensive of late—I hope your
presence

“presence will enliven us.—You
 “are musical—so is she:—but
 “your *taste*, (she was) pleased to
 “say) is so remarkably fine, that
 “you will, I know, at my desire,
 “accompany her sometimes on
 “the harpsichord.—She has a
 “sweet pipe—and really as much
 “taste as any English finger I
 “ever heard:—but you, gentle-
 “men, who have been in that
 “land of harmony, *Italy*, pick
 “up a thousand graces in your
 “manner of performance, both
 “in the voice and instrument,
 “which *we*, in England, never
 “arrive at.—You will oblige me,
 “my lord, to give her a few of
 “your lordship’s instructions,
 “whilst we have the honour of
 “your stay at South-Park.—The

word

B 5

“ dear

“ dear girl, too, has a great genius for the pencil.—Do, my dear, (she continued to the sweet blushing Sophia) shew his lordship the last drawings of those beautiful landscapes you have lately finished.”

With a modest reluctance the angel rose, and exhibited, with her usual humility, some drawings of such exquisite taste and execution, that I could hardly conceal my *very* particular emotions of *admiration*. — Heavens! did my good old friend imagine I was a perfect *stock* or *stone*, to see the productions of a genius equal to any of our most capital artists! and that these productions, too, should be the work of the most lovely woman of the age?—And how,

how, alas ! is my remaining *resolution* to be *tried* to its utmost powers, if I am to *bear*, as well as *see*, the united efforts of taste and execution in the all-accomplished Sophia Woodley !—O virtue, virtue, great are thy *rewards*—but greater still thy *trials* !

Villars—I shall take the earliest opportunity of leaving South Park as soon as I handsomely can :—perhaps in a few days.—I *charge* you, write as soon after your arrival in France, as an *enquiry* can be made: an *enquiry*, on which depends the ultimate misery or happiness of

your most faithful,

and affectionate

BELFORD.

B 6

LET-

LETTER XXV.

Miss Harriet Granby, to Miss Sophia Woodley,

Paris, July 12.

AN opportunity, this moment, of
fering, my best beloved friend,
to write to England, I snatch up
my pen to thank you for your de-
lightful hermitage scene—and to
congratulate you on the prospects
which seem to be opening apace
for your perfect happiness.

And were you at the hour of
penning your agreeable epistle to
your Harriet, in the *very* next
apartment to — I will not
name *names*—but—O sad—sad—
and a breach of all forms of *punc-*
tillio (you must and *shall* give me
leave here to rally you) that you
should,

should, in a fainting fit, be encircled even in the very arms of this enchanting man!—And did your head my Sophy, recline on his breast?—And did the naughty man steal a few soft kisses from your languid cheek?—Rude creature! Well—I should like to hear of all things, *his* account of this terrible business.—To be sure, child, your taking his handkerchief, to cover that bosom of yours (a circumstance which gives you so much uneasiness, as fearing it was, using your own phrase, *too forward*) was a most dreadful violation of decency. Would an Urania—a Cassandra—or any of the heroines in romance, think ye, have committed such an *indecorum* against all the laws of rigid *prudery*?

dery? No—they would, I will be sworn for it, have run the risque of a burning fever, sooner than have *yielded* to have accepted *such* an offer from their captive knight.—Sophy, you are a little prude after all.

Now do I see my sweet girl with a demure face, lay down my letter, exclaiming—“Aye that *air* of
 “Paris, that sink of levity and
 “dissipation, has, I fear, already
 “made some alteration in those
 “very *refined* notions—that *ex-*
 “treme of delicacy, which is the
 “pride—the glory—the ornament
 “of our sex, and which I really
 “thought my Harriet till now
 “possessed.”—No—my dear girl, I am still *uncorrupted* by the *dissipated* shameless manners practised
 by

by this *polite* nation—I am still as *cruel* as a tygress to the fine fellows who visit us.—In short, *my hour* (though it plainly appears *yours is*) is *not yet come*: but my heart is so elated with the very apparent hopes of your approaching felicity, that you must give me leave to enjoy my present little flow of spirits, whatever may be your feelings.—Sophy, this man is in love with you to distraction, take my word for it:—and indeed his whole behaviour shews it.—I make not the least doubt but that, by *this* time, he has *declared* himself, in due form, your *lover*;—that you, taking *pity* on him, and observing my late *advice* of not *modesty-ing away* (an expression, child, I assure you, of your favourite author Richardson) have after
a few

a few awkward hesitations—blushes—tremors, &c. confessed, in a soft accent, that you do *not hate him*;—that the dear, good lady Worthy, is all rapture on the occasion;—that patterns of silks are talked of; that the old chapel (for the ceremony of ceremonies) is going to be beautified and put in compleat order; that an early day is talked of; and that a special licence, and the ring, are ordered to be ready by the *appointed* time. Tell me, my sweet friend, that all these things are really come to pass, and make your faithful Harriet the happiest of human beings.

Who do you think has the unparalleled audacity, to be shewing herself in public, at Paris, and her infamous paramour (her *seducer*, I fancy he (was not) but that vile
wretch

wretch miss G——? I have heard the whole of her horrid elopement from a correspondent of mine in London.—What a noble-minded girl are you, my dear, never to propagate her shame, by informing me of her wickedness!—You—whom she has so cruelly used, and even insulted!—That heart of yours, is surely the seat of every virtue and of purity itself—a little *encroaching passion*, however, in the *middle of it* excepted?—But are you really a stranger, my Sophy, to *female resentment*? to the little foibles of our sex?—which, certainly, with the just provocation you have had, would have quite justified you, if you had given the most ample scope for your pen.—What would some women have given for *such* a subject, to gratify their favourite

rite

rite passions of scandal and resentment !

I grieve to hear the fate of that most amiable woman Lady B——, of which a correspondent in town likewise informs me.—What have these wretches to answer for !

*

*

*

*

I was last night at the opera:—the above infamous woman sat in the next box, and had the assurance to stare at me for some moments; then turned round to Sir George B——, and burst into a loud laugh.—He is not the only one who shares her favours, I find,—but his eyes will be opened soon I doubt not. O that I could see her doing some severe penance for her
lewd

lewd conduct, and for her insults to my Sophy !

Adieu for the present. My father remains on the mending hand ; he is as much yours, as is

Your faithful

HARRIET.

P. S. Of my brother I can say nothing, as we seldom see him, though he is in Paris.

L E T T E R XXVI.

Miss Sophia Woodley, to Miss Harriet Granby,
at Paris; in answer to her last.

South Park, August 3.

NO, my Harriet,—no: — the warm wishes of your affectionate heart for my happiness, will

will not — *cannot* be gratified:—
Alas! no flattering hope remains
for your poor Sophia, who is now
irrecoverably wretched. Talk not,
I beseech you, my sweet girl, of
an early day,—of patterns of silks,
of a ring, and licence, &c.—What
day-dreams have you been indul-
ging in my favour!—Alas! child,
Lord Belford is—*another's*! — not
married, it is true; —but, to a
mind so noble—so exalted as *his*,
engagements of honour, and gra-
titude, are equally binding with
the most solemn tie of marriage.

You are mistaken—egregiously
mistaken, my Harriet, in your ima-
gining this most excellent young
man ever did, or ever could love
your poor Sophia. He left South-
parkearly yesterday morning, with-
out

out taking leave of your friend.

—Perhaps this may be called *politeness*, — I think it is called the *French* mode of quitting a visit. *

Of Lady Worthy, however, I suppose, he took a handsome adieu.

I was just gone for a moment into my apartment, when, to my astonishment,

I heard him run down stairs—saw him step into his post-

chaife and four—and he was out of sight in an instant.—He left, how-

ever, his compliments:—but yet, I think, after having been here a

fortnight, and from the regard shewn me by my honoured friend

lady Worthy, he *might*, methinks, have just said, *farewell*—Don't

* Our lover who suffered inexpressible agonies of mind in quitting Sophia, could not trust *himself* with taking leave of her, lest he should betray the secrets of his soul.

you

you think so Harriet?—But yet what have I to do, wretch that I am, to *presume* to *expect* that he *should* have taken notice of me!

But now methinks I hear my friend ask, how I came to make this discovery of Lord Belford's being *engaged*?—Listen and I will tell you:—but, to lead to the discovery, I must mention the following circumstance.

Lady Worthy, through the excess of her bounty, every year, at this season, gives ten young maids in this, and the neighbouring parishes, twenty pounds each in marriage with honest and industrious young men. These weddings were celebrated a few days since:—the evening before, as I was with my maid Fanny, in my
apart-

apartment, she began—"What a
" sweet, charming gentleman,
" madam, is this lord Belford !—
" what do you think he has done?"
" Nay, (said I confused—but
" *carelessly*) I know not:—but
" what is it?"

" Why, madam," replied Fan-
ny, " would you believe it ?—he
" has sent a hundred guineas (as
" Mr. William, his footman, in-
" forms me) to the ten young
" maids who are to be married to-
" morrow morning, to be equal-
" ly divided among them, to-
" wards furnishing their cottages,
" &c. Is it not kind ?—but it is
" like Lord Belford ;—there is
" not such another gentleman to
" be sure in this world—and so
" Mr.

“ Mr. William, and all his servants say.”

“ He is,” said I in a low accent,
“ very good, I believe.”

This circumstance, my dear, I mention to you, as it in part occasioned the interesting discovery I made.

The next morning I went into lady Worthy's apartment as usual, but found her not risen.

“ My rheumatic complaints,
“ (said she) my dear child, I fear
“ will render me unable to rise
“ this morning to breakfast :—
“ therefore, you and lord Belford
“ must take that repast without
“ me.—I have ordered the breakfast
“ equipage to be carried into
“ the painted pavilion in the
grove,

“ grove, which situation his
 “ lordship so greatly admires in
 “ this intense heat of the season.—
 “ There, (added the dear woman)
 “ you will both be cool—and it
 “ will be pleasant. (I should here
 “ say that for the last ten days,
 “ we have had the most exces-
 “ sive hot weather ever known in
 “ this climate) I wish, (continued
 “ she) I could be of your little
 “ party.—His lordship is an in-
 “ valuable man.—Be sure, Sophy,
 “ take care of your guest.” — I
 curtsied, and withdrew. — Good
 Heavens ! thought I, to what am
 I exposed ! — but to proceed.

—To the painted pavilion I re-
 paired, which was not far from the
 house, where I saw the most ele-
 gant breakfast set out you can im-
 agine. — Bunches of roses and jas-

mines were disposed on the table ; and other sweet flowers were placed in a beautiful arrangement, and hanging in festoons ; a green lustring blind was let down, to prevent the scorching rays of the sun from entering ; whilst two French horns, on which two of lady Worthy's servants perform very well, were placed in the adjoining wood ; and, in short, rendered the whole scene perfectly delightful.

Upon my word, thought I, her ladyship's compliment to lord Belford, in all this, is truly elegant.

I had just seated myself — when our *too* amiable guest arrived : — never had I seen him so handsome — never did he appear more irresistible : — the warmth of the season

feason had given a glow to his fine
 face, unspeakably lovely.—He en-
 tered with an air I thought of
forced ease and gaiety :—when be-
 ing struck with the elegant deco-
 rations of this little sweet edifice—
 he exclaimed, “ Why, really miss
 “ Martin, (looking round) what
 “ an enchanting taste is here dis-
 “ played !—Here seems an assem-
 “ blage of every thing lovely in na-
 “ ture.--This *all* is your ordering ?”
 “ No really, my lord (interrupted
 “ I in a sort of forced gaiety) I
 “ disclaim all merit on this occa-
 “ sion. — The taste and elegance
 “ here displayed, is all the ordering
 “ of my noble benefactress, in
 “ compliment to your lordship :
 “ I am (continued I with a smile)
 “ quite innocent of this matter.”

We now began breakfast:—I wished in that moment to have been a hundred miles distant, as I was dreadfully afraid my too visible confusion would betray me.—I made a thousand blunders;—I poured the tea into the sugar dish—and put the sugar into the stop basin.

“Those charming French horns
“ (said I) call up all my attention—” thinking by this to excuse my blunders.—“And (said his
“ lordship, in evident confusion,
“ though for what heaven knows)
“ I was so delighted with that
“ distant sound of yonder cascade,
“ that I had almost forgot my duty—” offering me the tea-pot at the time instead of the cakes.—
In short, never was such a set of blun-

blunders as we were both full of.— I once caught his eyes fixed on me with the most respectful attention—and yet mingled with an air of *concern*. — “ Surely (thought I “ blushing) this man has not discovered my weakness;” here I felt my pride sufficiently mortified.

A subject, however, his lordship began, the farthest from any thing interesting, that could be:— he talked of the climate of England;—of its very great changes, &c. and we both entered into it with much gravity: when on a sudden, we heard the village bell from the church, just without the park gates, ringing a merry peal.—“ Hark! the bells”—said lord Belford:— and just then pass’d through the avenue, in

sight of us, the very pleasing view of the brides—their bridegrooms — and the other young men and maidens of the parish. They were just returned from church, and were accompanied by some young girls, who was strewing flowers on the path before them, with a pipe and tabor preceding them—and were going to the house of the beneficent lady, who had by her bounty, enabled them to *marry*.

Lord Belford seemed particularly pleased with this simple scene of rural felicity, as indeed was I.

“ Happy pairs ! — (said he) —
“ long may ye continue so.” —
Here he fetched a deep *sigh*, as if
from the very bottom of his soul :
and

—and I, silly creature that I was, sighed too, as if in sympathy.

“ Yes — (said I awkwardly) —
“ they are—are happy.” — Again sighing. — “ What a refined delight (said he) must that truly
“ good woman, Lady Worthy,
“ enjoy, — in making so many
“ people happy for life.”

Thou excellent young man, thought I—who little thinks that I know thy merit on this occasion is equal with her's!—I replied, “ Yes
“ mylord, her delight must certainly
“ be extreme.” — Then looking up and smiling †—for at this moment

† Lord Belford, in his account of this scene to his Villars, says, Sophia's *smile* on this occasion, had such an interesting sensibility in it, that it was with the utmost difficulty he prevented himself from throwing his person at her feet, and avowing his passion.

I confess I was enchanted with his modest humility, in mentioning an affair as *wholly* to be ascribed to Lady Worthy, when he himself had been equally bountiful.

—“Yes—but there is *one* person
“in the world as generous as her
“ladyship:—I *could* name *him*, if
“I thought it would not offend
“his delicacy.”

This amiable man, I believe, *perfectly* understood me, for in a moment his face was the colour of scarlet.—And now, my dear Harriet, the interesting discovery began of his being *engaged*.

“If I envy any beings on
“earth (said I) it is people of
“large fortune, who have it both
“in their *will* and *power* to confer
“happiness on the industrious poor.

I paused

I paused a moment — then suddenly—“ How happy must your
 “ lordship be, who is so emi-
 “ nently distinguished for your be-
 “ nevolence!”—He looked down
 and sighed.

“ Alas ! madam — he cried —
 “ you mistake me in this matter,
 “ I am far from being happy—
 “ very far :—nay, I might add,
 “ I am, at this moment, the
 “ most miserable of men.”

“ Good heavens!—my lord, is
 “ it possible—?”

“ Very possible, miss Mar-
 “ tin.”

Here a very affecting, profound
 silence ensued for some minutes—
 during which his lordship and I
 took up each a rose-bud from the
 table, and amused ourselves in

picking them leaf by leaf, entirely to pieces.—At length, looking up, I said in faltering accents—“ If
“ *you*, my lord, are *not* happy—I
“ know not who can be so—I am
“ very sorry — very much so, to
“ hear you say this.”

“ Methinks (said he, fixing his
“ fine eyes on mine) methinks I
“ see an air of curious attention in
“ the most lovely face in the
“ world:—I think I can repose
“ my sorrows in the bosom of
“ tenderness. Will you be my
“ *confidante*, dearest miss Mar-
“ tin?”

I bowed—but could not speak.

“ My story is short (said he)
“ and I will dwell as little as I
“ can, on the most affecting parts
“ of

“ of it, that I may not wound a
 “ sensibility so great as your’s.”

Good God ! (thought I, what
can he be going to say ?— After
 some little hesitation, his lordship
 began his short history in these
 words † :

“ About four years since, after
 “ I had made the tour of Europe,
 “ I made Paris in my way to Eng-
 “ land, and resided there some
 “ months. I was connected with
 “ an agreeable set of young English-
 “ men of distinction about my
 C 6 “ own.

† The reader may possibly wonder, why lord
 Belford should tell his story to Miss Woodley—
 but the most generous motives induced him so
 to do. In fact, he had observed an increasing af-
 fection, very visible to himself only, in that
 young lady in his favour. This discovery had
 greatly heightened his passion for her, but he was
 too noble-minded not to preclude, every flatter-
 ing hope he might have indulged, as he looked
 on himself as engaged to another.

“ own age. One of them, who
 “ most shared my confidence,
 “ having unfortunately a passion
 “ for play, in one night lost his
 “ all.—Being reduced to necessities
 “ by his folly, he applied to
 “ me for assistance; and, from
 “ time to time, I advanced for him
 “ all the cash I could draw from
 “ my banker.

“ My father was then living;
 “ and who, though a good parent,
 “ was *exact* as to my article of ex-
 “ pences.

“ At length my friend’s debts
 “ being great, and his creditors
 “ importunate, to make him easy,
 “ I bound myself in a bond of a
 “ thousand guineas, payable at a
 “ certain date.—But, alas! my
 “ remittances not answering such

“ a

“ a demand, and not chusing im-
“ mediately to declare my rank,
“ I was *confined* till the money
“ could be raised.

“ I passed two days disagreeably
“ enough, though my place of
“ restraint, I should say, was at my
“ own lodgings.

“ On the third evening, as I
“ was racking my brains for ways
“ and means to raise the sum I
“ was bound for, without the
“ knowledge of my father, a let-
“ ter was brought by a boy, whom
“ no one knew, and who imme-
“ diately departed ; saying, it re-
“ quired no answer. I looked at
“ the superscription, but was con-
“ vinced the hand-writing must
“ be *feigned* ; as no person who
“ could write at all but must
“ write

“ write more legibly :—however,
“ as directed to me, I opened it.—
“ But what was my surprize to
“ see enclosed in it fifteen hun-
“ dred pounds in Bank bills !

“ I sat for some moments lost
“ in astonishment, which was still
“ encreased, when I recollected
“ every friend I had in France ;
“ and that none of them, though
“ all of rank, had yet such a sum
“ to command on such an occa-
“ sion ; as Paris, of all places,
“ may be said to be the seat of the
“ most expensive dissipation.

“ My joy, however, it must be
“ imagined, was extreme.—I, the
“ next morning, paid the debt ;
“ and, in the evening, dressed and
“ went to visit an English family,
“ where was a young gentleman
“ of

“ of great merit, who was my
“ friend; and who, I thought,
“ *might* perhaps have been this
“ very generous unknown.—I en-
“ tered the room where the fa-
“ mily were assembled, who all
“ congratulated me on my being
“ at *large*.

“ I fancy (said I, looking sted-
“ fastly at my young friend) that
“ *you*, Horatio, are entitled to my
“ very warmest thanks on this
“ occasion.—Let me embrace so
“ sincere—so generous a friend.
“ —Fifteen hundred pounds of
“ bills, in a blank cover—! Good
“ heavens, Horatio, you are too
“ generous!”

“ I was running on with my
“ acknowledgements, and how
“ very soon he should have his
“ kind

“ kind *loan* returned,—when he
“ most solemnly assured me he
“ had never advanced one shilling
“ on that occasion, and was even
“ astonished to hear me.”

“ My dear Orlando,” said he,
(what a pretty name is Orlando,
my Harriet!) “ I heartily wish I
“ had been master of that sum,
“ to have assisted you, with all
“ my heart,—but it was abso-
“ lutely out of my power.

“ Whilst we were talking of
“ this matter, I accidentally cast
“ my eyes round the room, and
“ saw the sister of Horatio turn
“ pale—in a violent tremor—and
“ near fainting.—(O my Harriet,
“ that *sister*!)—This I alone re-
“ marked; — for her disorder, by
“ the company, was not observed,
“ and

“ and she soon recovered from it.
“ —Julia, for some reasons—Miss
“ Martin, I will call her by no
“ other name, as I would not
“ have her unfortunate little
“ history known at all, in Eng-
“ land.—Julia, I say, was that
“ evening remarkably pensive,—
“ though always rather of a grave
“ turn—She was a mild, good
“ girl: but I cannot say she had
“ ever attracted my notice particu-
“ larly:—as the sister of my friend
“ I had been in company with her,
“ and the rest of that English party,
“ to several public places; and
“ was intimate in the family.—I
“ had never, *then*, Miss Martin,
“ seen *beauty* (his lordship here
“ sighed) at least, I had never seen
“ that *peculiar* kind of beauty, or
“ loveliness, which could ever
“ touch

“ touch my youthful heart: in
“ short, my hour was not *then*
“ come.”

“ Julia had not, it is certain,
“ the least pretensions to beauty:
“ —her person is what may be
“ called *barely* agreeable; she is
“ young—and has been well edu-
“ cated:—her rank and family are
“ noble,—and her brother is one
“ of the most estimable men I
“ know.—But to proceed with
“ my story.

“ The next day I sauntered into
“ a jeweller’s shop, to purchase
“ some trinkets to send to Eng-
“ land, when I observed, as I was
“ talking to the jeweller, a very
“ beautiful diamond necklace,—a
“ pair of diamond earrings,—and a
“ brilliant sprig of great elegance.
“ —There was, likewise, a ring
“ of

“ of two hearts, with a ruby
“ crown on them, which I
“ thought I had somewhere seen
“ before. The master of the
“ shop was looking over these
“ jewels.—I expressed my admi-
“ ration of their peculiar elegance,
“ both as to beauty, and in the
“ manner of their setting.

“ Pray give me leave (said I)
“ Sir, to look at this necklace :
“ —it is uncommonly beautiful.
“ I took it in my hand ;—but
“ I must confess my astonishment
“ was great, when I was con-
“ vinced, this very necklace I had
“ seen on the neck of Julia, but
“ just before my late misfortune :
“ —the sprig too of diamonds, as
“ well as the earrings and ring, I
“ could have sworn had been
“ her's ;

“ her’s ; as I remembered seeing
“ her at the opera in all those or-
“ naments ; and particularly, af-
“ terwards, talking to her about
“ her diamonds, which her bro-
“ ther shewed me, on account of
“ the extreme beauty of their set-
“ ting.

“ My surprize was great.—The
“ jeweller, who had all the *pert*
“ talkativeness of his nation,
“ joined with me in praising
“ them.

“ The fair lady who parted
“ with them, said he, wanted I
“ imagine a sum of money and
“ perhaps had no other way (being
“ possibly in guardians hands)
“ of raising it.

“ And pray, said I, what
“ might be the purchase of this
“ beau-

“ beautiful collection—if not an
“ impertinent question — what
“ might you give for your bargain?
“ I gave (returned this pra-
“ ting jeweller) fifteen hundred
“ pounds for the whole, and will
“ sell them at a reasonable profit,
“ Heavens ! how I was struck,
“ when the man mentioned the
“ sum of *fifteen hundred* pounds !
“ strange ideas began to fill my
“ mind.—I seemed to express
“ great surprize, which the man,
“ I fancy, construed into my doubt-
“ ing his veracity as to the price
“ of these jewels he had bought ;
“ for he instantly said, I assure
“ you, Sir, what I say is fact :—
“ the young lady, who parted with
“ them, is now in Paris, and
“ lives in the great Square de
“ R——.

“ R——. But I name no names

“ — I was enjoined secrecy.

“ Nay (interrupted I) it can be
“ no way material to me:—I am
“ a stranger in Paris, and so good
“ morrow to you, Sir.—Saying
“ which, I left the shop, and re-
“ turned to my apartment, ex-
“ tremely amazed,—indeed alarm-
“ ed.—Is it *possible* (said I to my-
“ self) that Julia could part with
“ her *diamonds* to relieve my
“ wants?”

O Harriet, how my heart at
this moment fluttered!—I thought
it would have burst my bosom.—
“ Happy, Julia! thought I—What
unparalleled generosity was this!
O, my dear, how must Lord Bel-
ford *adore* such a woman! For see
you not the noble-minded donor
was

was this lady?"—His lordship continued.

" I am not, Miss Martin, a
" vain fellow.—It is true, this
" jeweller had mentioned the very
" square where Julia resided;—
" the very *sum* in question;—and
" these *very* identical jewels I had
" seen on the lady;—but yet I
" would not—I could not bring
" myself to imagine so *very* ex-
" traordinary an act of generosity
" had been transacted on my ac-
" count:—and yet I recollected
" her extreme agitation the mo-
" ment I was making my acknow-
" ledgments to her brother, as
" supposing *him* to have been my
" friend on this occasion. — In
" short, I knew not what to think;
" and

“ and my mind was so agitated,
“ that I passed a sleepless night.”

Ah! who doubts it, thought
your poor Sophia.

“ The next day I was to dine
“ with a large party in the family
“ where Julia resided. — I was
“ surprised not to see her appear
“ the whole day ;—and what I
“ began much to wonder at, for
“ near a month that I visited very
“ frequently at the house, I never
“ saw her. I occasionally asked
“ if Miss Julia was ill?—and was
“ answered, a little indisposed.

“ Her brother, whom, as I
“ have before said, I loved much,
“ appeared extremely thoughtful,
“ and as if some heavy affliction
“ lay on his mind.—Still in my
“ visits

“ visits I saw not Julia :—I, how-
“ ever, did not long remain in
“ ignorance of her situation.

“ I happened to have a cold, for
“ which bleeding was deemed ne-
“ cessary. — When the surgeon
“ came who was to perform this
“ operation, he made an apology
“ for not coming at the hour that
“ had been appointed. Indeed, said
“ he, I have been on a melan-
“ choly business—to bleed a poor
“ young lady in the square de R—
“ who is, I fear, in a most de-
“ plorable way.

“ The square de R— ! what
“ is her name pray ?—if it be
“ not impertinent.—He instantly
“ named miss Julia.—Surely, he
“ continued, you, Sir, must know
“ this amiable young lady : —she

“ is an English woman.— What,
“ said I, has she a fever?—No—he
“ replied—would it were only a *bo-*
“ *dily* malady! — but the disorder
“ is wholly in her mind: —a deep
“ and settled melancholy has taken
“ the entire possession of her soul :
“ —she neither eats, sleeps, nor
“ speaks: — she has been in this
“ way some time, and much I
“ fear, it will terminate in a settled
“ madness. — The family where
“ she is are wretched about her :
“ —she is of noble extraction, I
“ find.

“ Good God! (exclaimed I
greatly shocked at this account)
“ you astonish me,—her brother is
“ my intimate friend! —But is her
“ health affected?—

“ Yes, much so, he returned—

“ her

“ her constitution is extremely
“ delicate :—and this secret grief,
“ this malady at her heart, which
“ no one can divine the cause of,
“ will most certainly bring her
“ into a deep decline. — The sur-
“ geon soon after left me, and I
“ remained in much doubt, —
“ perplexity,—and anxiety.”

I was here so much affected,
Harriet—I could not help invol-
untarily exclaiming aloud, Ah!
poor young lady ! — His lordship
sighed — looked down — and at
length continued—

“ That evening, as I was sitting
“ alone in a most melancholy situ-
“ ation, a letter was brought di-
“ rected for me, written, though
“ imperfectly, in a woman’s hand:
“ — but heavens ! how I was

“shocked at the contents! This
 “letter,” continued his lordship,
 taking out an ivory pocket book,
 “I always carry about me:—and
 “here, miss Martin, you may read
 “it.”—He sighed.

I took the letter, trembling,
 perused it *most attentively* two or
 three times, whilst Lord Belford
 retired to the door, and found it
 to contain, as nearly as I can re-
 member, the following most affect-
 ing contents.

The LETTER.

“BUT is it true—really true,
 “Orlando, that you are going
 “to be married to that fine lady
 “Caroline — I forget her other
 “name — for my poor brain is
 “gone,—quite gone.”

“Stop,

“ Stop, Miss Martin,” said his
 lordship, turning hastily round,
 “ the poor Julia mentions, I think,
 “ in the beginning of her letter,
 “ she had heard of my marriage
 “ with a lady Caroline.—There
 “ had been some reports of such
 “ a matter for some weeks before
 “ —but it was totally groundless ;
 “ —neither had I even so much
 “ as ever seen the lady. — This
 “ circumstance, I mention, ma-
 “ dam, lest you should not know
 “ what poor Julia meant.”

I bowed — and again began perusing this *sad* letter.

“ But pray, Orlando, do not
 “ tell your *fine* Caroline what I
 “ suffer ; — *indeed* I will never
 “ trouble you. — But let me see,
 “ what did I take up my pen for ?

“ O now, I have it:—my request
“ is, that you will *delay* your
“ bridal ceremony for a few—a
“ very few weeks:—do stay, Or-
“ lando, till I am cold—and laid
“ low.—I soon shall — It is true
“ — nothing has passed between
“ us—no promises—no assurances
“ on your side.— Were you ever
“ as reserved and indifferent to
“ your fine Caroline?— ah, no—
“ Orlando, where are you? I have
“ not seen you a long—long time:
“ —but ’tis no matter. — I lead a
“ very melancholy life.—But pray,
“ when you return to England
“ with your *happy* Caroline, do
“ not let my friends know that
“ poor Julia’s brain is turned.—
“ you will be always kind to my
“ beloved Horatio, I hope — not
“ for

“ for *my sake* though, because
 “ you *never loved* poor Julia:—
 “ *that* I well know. I had a
 “ great deal to say when I began
 “ this letter, but thought — and
 “ grief—and confusion, croud so
 “ fast upon me—they have un-
 “ done me—quite ruined my brain.
 “ —Orlando, if you *guess some-*
 “ *thing, never tell*, I beg: you
 “ know what I mean. — *Silence,*
 “ *everlasting silence* on *that* sub-
 “ ject I enjoin you. — Adieu—
 “ adieu—I hope we shall sit next
 “ each other in heaven. — You
 “ know who writes this, though
 “ I do not put my *name*.”

Do you think, Harriet, I did not
 weep at this melancholy epistle?
 Indeed I did. — I returned it to
 Lord Belford — wet with the

cred drops of pity. — He was silent for some moments—then sitting down, — he again continued his affecting story.

“ This most distressing letter,
 “ cut me to the soul.—I saw poor
 “ Horatio the next day ; but being
 “ determined never to mention
 “ the sad subject, I said not
 “ a syllable that could lead to it.
 “ —He told me, however, that
 “ his dear *unhappy* sister (those
 “ were his words) was ordered by
 “ her physicians, to go to *Aix-la-
 “ Chapelle*.—We are all going.—
 “ will you, my friend, (continued
 “ he looking on me earnestly) will
 “ you visit us there ? —I promised
 “ him I would.

“ The week following, the
 “ poor Julia and her brother, with
 “ the

“ the good family she was with,
“ all set out for *Aix* —, and
“ about a month after I arrived
“ there myself.—Horatio received
“ me with the most affectionate
“ embrace—he even wept in my
“ bosom.

“ How do you *all*, said I.

“ All well, returned he, but
“ the poor lost Julia. Sometimes
“ she is moping—sometimes weep-
“ ing—but now she is raving.—
“ Oh Orlando, could *you* but *save*
“ the dear girl!

“ He wept ;— I took *in* the
“ whole of my poor friend’s mean-
“ ing : — I was shocked at his
“ manner beyond expression.

“ Can it be possible, said I,
“ that the unhappy — He inter-
“ rupted me.

“ Possible ! said he — alas, it is
“ *too* certain, that this unhappy
“ girl is under the influence of a
“ passion which has turned her
“ reason.—To *you*, my friend, I
“ am above all reserve—need I say
“ more ?—In short, Orlando, she
“ loves you to distraction.

“ Good heavens, said I—all af-
“ fection on this sad subject is
“ unpardonable — much could I
“ do to *save*, as you call it, the
“ sister of my dear Horatio.—Can
“ I see her ? where is she ?—alas !
“ you distress me greatly.

“ She has been (returned he
“ mournfully) quite ungovern-
“ able this whole day ; and endea-
“ vouring continually to break
“ from her attendants, to see *some-*
“ *body* (as she always calls *you*) at
“ Paris.

“ Paris.—She says if she could see
 “ *somebody*, but once, she should
 “ die in peace.—He wept.

“ O my friend, said I — I can-
 “ not bear this. Had I not bet-
 “ ter be conducted to her?

“ He left me for a few minutes,
 “ in which I suffered inexpressible
 “ agonies.

“ On his return he informed
 “ me they were going to bleed
 “ her; but added he, some per-
 “ son in the room having whis-
 “ pered to another that you was
 “ arrived, she caught the sound,
 “ and had firmly resolved to see
 “ you before she is murdered, as
 “ she calls it. Lady Saxby, who
 “ is with her, thinks you had
 “ better see her now.

“ O Miss Martin, what did I *feel*,

“ in ascending the stairs to her a-
 “ partment !—but my agitation
 “ was greatly encreased, when on
 “ the door opening, I saw her sit-
 “ ting (her arm bound up as for
 “ bleeding) with her hair dishe-
 “ villed, fingina wild kind of air.
 “ —The instant she espied me, she
 “ sprang with incredible swiftneſs
 “ acroſs the room—and with the
 “ eye and frantic manner of a wretch
 “ in Bedlam, caught hold of my arm.

“ O—ſo you are come at laſt to
 “ ſave me !——Here, Orlando,
 “ they would have murdered me
 “ amongſt them: ſee they have
 “ bound me.—Come, ſit down,
 “ Orlando, by me.

“ Dear young lady, ſaid I,
 “ be compoſed.

“ Dear !—Dear ! did you ſay ?
 (ſhe

“ (she returned with inimitable
“ quickness, and instantly a soft-
“ ness, a langour took possession of
“ her features that was amazing)
“ Come, said she, in a low voice, let
“ us sit down together,—and I will
“ tell you *all* I have suffered.—I
“ have a pain—a pain just *here*,
“ (putting her hand to her fore-
“ head) a stupid pain—can your
“ hand heal it? Then looking
“ stedfastly on me for a few
“ moments, she exclaimed—Go,
“ Go, you are married—Go to
“ your Caroline.

“ The surgeon, who was ready
“ to bleed her, joined with lady
“ Saxby, who was bitterly weep-
“ ing, to desire I would persuade
“ her to the operation; on my in-
“ treating her to consent,—Do
“ you,

“ you, Orlando, wish to see me
“ bleed?—Well, then, if you *will*
“ murder me—but remember you
“ hold my wounded arm.—The
“ operation being now performed,
“ I held her arm—on the surgeon
“ applying the bandage she fainted.

“ O lord Belford,” (here I ex-
claimed) “ forbear—forbear the
“ piteous story.—You said you
“ would not wound my sensibili-
“ ty.—Alas ! it is wounded in
“ the tenderest manner.”—Here I
sobbed almost aloud.—His lord-
ship retired to the window to hide
his fast-flowing tears.—On his
again seating himself,—“ I will
“ now conclude,” said he, “ as
“ soon as the circumstances will
“ permit.”

“ I spent some days with Ho-
ratio

“ ratio in agonies of mind not to
“ be with accuracy expressed.

“ It was plain that Horatio and
“ lady Saxby, looked up to *me* to
“ *heal* the wounded mind of this
“ unhappy lady.—There appeared
“ a degree of inhumanity in me
“ not to do it, that my soul abhor-
“ red.—Though I felt the most
“ bleeding pity, the most exqui-
“ site gratitude for the poor un-
“ fortunate Julia, I certainly felt
“ no more, and imagined some-
“ thing beyond them, something
“ more prevailing than mere *pity*
“ and *gratitude* must be felt, in
“ order to make the married state
“ happy. Love for the poor un-
“ happy Julia, I had none, and
“ therefore she could by no means
“ be the person of my choice. I had
“ told my friend, her brother, that
“ the

“ the only consolation I had, was,
“ that I had not deceived his sister,
“ or made the least advances to her,
“ previous to her malady—and that
“ if I *was* the cause of it—I was
“ certainly most *innocently* so :—
“ Of this he was perfectly con-
“ vinced.—To be brief—my *pity*
“ —my *gratitude* at last, got the
“ better of all considerations.

“ The morning of my depar-
“ ture from Aix, Horatia joined
“ me in the garden : his genero-
“ sity affected me excessively.

“ So—said he, mournfully—
“ you are going to leave us.—
“ Don't let a thought of *our*
“ dreadful situation ever disturb
“ your bosom : this poor girl
“ *must* die :—and indeed, to say
“ truth——

“ My

“ My dearest friend, inter-
 “ rupted I, she shall not die,
 “ if I may *presume* to imagine,
 “ as you all do, that it is in
 “ my power to restore her—we
 “ will see what can be done ;
 “ at present, to visit her, I think
 “ would be wrong—How is she
 “ this morning ?

“ In a way, hereplied, that pier-
 “ ces my soul to repeat.—She has
 “ been just dressing herself up
 “ with flowers to receive a visit,
 “ she says, from Lady Caroline.—
 “ You will let us hear from you,
 “ Orlando, sometimes.—But as
 “ to the *sacrifice* you talk of—
 “ Julia, may not possibly, (sup-
 “ posing she does recover) be the
 “ kind of woman to make you
 “ happy.

“ Can

“ Can you think it possible,
“ returned I, that I can see the
“ sister of my beloved Horatio in
“ *such* a situation as this melanco-
“ ly scene affords, and remain un-
“ feeling? No, it is impossible.

“ Much more of this distressing
“ conversation passed between us:
“ —when at length (my chaise
“ waiting) we again embraced:—
“ we wept. — Remember your
“ Orlando, (said I, in faltering
“ accents) has *gratitude*, — has
“ *friendship*, — has *pity*. — I then
“ flung myself into my carriage
“ in a situation of mind not to
“ be expressed.

“ My friend had promised to
“ write every month, and he
“ kept his word; but the accounts
“ still

“ still continued most melancholy,
“ and dissatisfactory.—Sometimes
“ the poor Julia has been to all
“ appearance better ;—then sud-
“ denly again relapsing :—her
“ health, and the disorder in her
“ mind, have been fluctuating :
“ now better—now worse. Every
“ change of scene in France, has
“ been tried—every different air—
“ and every possible attention—
“ with every aid of medicine.

“ For the last half year, to my
“ surprise, I have had no account
“ at all.—So, whether the poor
“ unfortunate is, or is not in being
“ at this juncture, I cannot say.—
“ I am amazed Horatio does not
“ write.—I have some reason to
“ think they are gone into Italy,
“ to try some famous baths near
“ Milan.

“ One great difficulty has been
 “ to conceal this most grievous
 “ calamity from the family of Ju-
 “ lia in England.—Lady Saxby,
 “ her kind friend, and Horatio,
 “ have still hoped a *recovery* might
 “ be perfected, without impart-
 “ ing the dreadful tidings of this
 “ unhappy affair—and constantly
 “ have written over accounts that
 “ they remain abroad for the im-
 “ provement, &c. of Julia, and
 “ her brother.

“ This *innocent* little deception
 “ has luckily passed off very well
 “ with her family in England,
 “ who would be to the last de-
 “ gree wretched, if the *real* cause
 “ was discovered. Julia *may* re-
 “ cover, and her malady never be
 “ known.”

His

His lordship here looked down,—
 paused—and then resumed.

“ I certainly am, Miss Martin,
 “ at this time in the most distress-
 “ ing—the most critical situa-
 “ tion in the world.—If this poor
 “ lady *has* recovered the use of her
 “ reason, as possibly she now *may*
 “ have done, I shall think myself
 “ bound to discharge the promise
 “ I made to Horatio, by speedily
 “ offering my hand to her, what-
 “ ever the sacrifice may cost me.”

“ Undoubtedly, my lord,” said
 I, and here I felt myself raised by
 my magnanimous and *disinterested*
 speech,—“ undoubtedly—and the
 “ sooner, surely, an union be-
 “ tween Lord Belford and the un-
 “ happy Lady Julia takes place,
 “ so much the better.—She *must*
 “ be

“ be Lord Belford’s :—Lord Belford *must* be Julia’s — she most justly *merits* your *tenderest* affection.”

Lord Belford here snatched my hand, exclaiming, “ Angelic creature !” — What he meant by this transport, I cannot conceive :—and for the *first* time, caught my hand to his lips, and imprinted on it *such* a kiss, my dear, that the mark of it remained there half an hour after :—indeed it did.

“ Generous miss Martin,” said he.

Good heaven, my Harriet, what could his lordship mean by the word *generous* ?—I think I never was so *hurt* in my life :—for does it not imply that he has seen your poor Sophia’s partiality in his favour ?

It

It certainly does : why else should he call me *generous* ? I am wretched, my dear, to an extreme, lest he should have found me *out*. As to his marriage with this poor lady, *that* will be a matter of satisfaction :—*indeed* it will, whatever *you* may think of the matter.

But now lord Belford was more *mysterious* than before.

“ And is it really,” (fixing his fine animated eyes on my glowing face) “ is it *your* advice, madam,” said he, “ that I should give my “ hand to Julia ?”

“ As to *advice*,” (I faintly replied) “ I have not the *presumption* to dare to *dictate* to your “ lordship.—The lady’s sufferings “ are peculiarly distressing, and
confe-

“ consequently they merit your
“ tenderest return.”

“ Heaven only knows, (re-
“ turned he, deeply sighing) what
“ this sacrifice will cost me—but
“ my *happiness* will be out of the
“ question :—I will be content to
“ be wretched for life, if I can
“ but restore *health* and *peace* to
“ the poor Julia.”

I was just going to reply to the
above noble sentiments, when we
saw lord Stilton's coach and fix
drive up the avenue, and we direct-
ly repaired to the house.—On our
way there, his lordship took out
his watch.

“ Heavens,” said he, “ it is
“ one o'clock !—three hours have
“ we been in that *sweet* pavilion :
“ it appeared to me not half the
“ time.—

“time. How swiftly the hours
 “glide away in some situations!”
 —What could he mean by *some*
 situations? — It is evident from
 what has passed, it could have no
 allusion to his situation with me.

Alas! my sweet girl, what
dreams have you been indulging
 about *hope* for your Sophia! Why
 will you, child, endeavour to per-
 suade yourself that I am beloved
 by this too amiable man? — I am
 convinced I am a most perfect *ob-*
ject of indifference to him, instead
 of affection. — Affection, indeed!
 no — no — Harriet, I could give
 you a hundred instances of his al-
 most *rudeness*. How often has he,
 when the good, *unsuspecting* lady
 Worthy has desired him to accom-
 pany me with his violin, made

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some fiddle-faddle excuse, and slipped out of the way ! — In regard to my drawings, he has been equally careless, and inattentive. — How often too, when he has met me alone in the gardens, has he turned away into another walk ? — And how often has he, on those days in which Lady Worthy was too ill to see him in her dressing-room, even sat *alone*, in his own apartment, sooner than in the parlour, in a *tête à tête* with your poor Sophia ! — And surely to leave the house without even saying *farewell*, was the height of incivility.

These circumstances I should not have mentioned, but to convince you that you never, child, was more *mistaken* in your whole life,

life, than in your present *hopes* with regard to *my* being an object, of either Lord Belford's *esteem*, or *affection*; his whole soul is absorbed in his Julia—and so it ought to be.—I was well enough convinced, before his melancholy story in the pavilion, that he was *in love*.—There was always, my dear, a pensive kind of languor in his eyes:—a fixed sadness there seemed too at his heart:—and how *deep* were his smothered sighs!—Poor man! I pity him.—How great must have been his agonies of soul, to think of what that poor unhappy Julia has suffered!—Well indeed might he sigh—and betray that absence of mind I have so often, and so particularly noticed in this most amiable man!—There is an

old saying, my friend, “ a *thief* “ can *best* catch a thief,”—I leave you to apply it :—I shall only say, had I never seen *Lord Belford*, I should never, I believe, have arrived at this *sort* of sagacious *penetration*.

But it is now high time to dispatch this enormous packet, or rather volume.—It is lucky for me, that our conveyance over the *channel* which divides us, will at least admit of my being as voluminous as I please, without being *confined* to one solitary sheet, by an officious post-boy : — though, at the same time, this very kind of conveyance which I now make use of, suggests to me the long distance which separates me from my *Harriet*.—I send this in a small box of shell-flowers, which I beg you will preserve for my sake. Say

Say every thing that is grateful and kind for me to your beloved parent: may he live to dance at *your* wedding. — But as to what you say of his doing so at mine, as Lady Belford — that will never be the case — at the *happy* *Julia's*, however, he may.

I suppose they will reside much in Devonshire. — “*They*! — who?” you ask. — *Whom* should I mean but Lord Belford and his Julia? If I had remained now at the Elms, I should have often had a glympse of them. — Heigh ho! — I have written myself into too melancholy a humour to say more than that

I am, ever your's,

most sincerely,

SOPHIA WOODLEY.

P. S. Yes, one thing more I have to say. — Lord Belford one day explained to me *where* he had formerly seen me in my days of *sweet* Woodley park: it was, it seems, at an assembly, where he danced a minuet with your Sophia. I since recollect it. “Still *harp-*
ing on this Lord Belford (you
 “cry) fye—for shame, Sophy, is
 “he not another’s.”—True.

LETTER XXVII.

Miss Harriet Granby to Miss Sophia Woodley.

Her last letter not then received.

Paris, Aug. 8.

“**W**HEN I said I should *die* an
 “old batchelor, I did not
 “know I should *live* to be mar-
 “ried;”

“ried ;” says Benedick, in *Much Ado about Nothing* : In like manner do I, Harriet Granby, spinster, protest, in all maiden simplicity, that when I said I would *die* an old maid, I did not know I should *live* to be a married woman.

You know, my dear, it is impossible one *can* have the gift of prophecy—or tell so long before-hand, *who*, or what one *may* live to see; or what one’s stars may be cooking for us :—I am not a friend to rash vows and promises.—After all is said that can be said on the subject of a single life,—and after all conclusions are tried, I fancy *we* women may at last honestly confess, that to be united for life to

an amiable worthy man, must be the height of human felicity.

“ Hah—Madam Harriet, have
 “ you at last (my Sophia exclaims)
 “ discovered you have a *heart not*
 “ quite as hard as adamant?—Have
 “ I at length found you out?—
 “ And is *your* hour now come, as
 “ well as your poor *Sophia's* ?”

Yes, my friend, I will frankly confess *my hour*—as you call it—is come:—I am no longer that *hard frozen-hearted* girl you, and many others, have always called me.—I now sigh—am absent—love *moon-light* as well as *yourself*.—should like to wander in a wood—or listen to the soft notes of the plaintive Philomel.—But, however, thank heaven, if I *love*, I have every reason to believe I am *beloved* also.

Not

Not to keep my sweet girl a moment longer in suspense, know then, that a most enchanting man is arrived at Paris.—You may talk of your Lord Belford as much as you please—but it is impossible, child, he can be more handsome—more sensible—more accomplished—than this amiable stranger:—and, upon my word, I think *Villars* full as pretty a name as *Orlando*.—You will know by this, that *Villars* is the name of the doughty hero who has at once convinced me I have a *heart*, and a *feeling* one too.

But my Sophia is all impatience, I doubt not, to know *when*, and *where*, I saw this wonderful man.—Listen, then, my dear, whilst I inform you.

About three weeks since, my father—who is grown young again—your Harriet, and a large party, all went to the opera.—We were but just arrived and seated, when entered into our box, one of the most agreeable figures of a man, I ever beheld.—His noble air—fine person—animated eyes (*he has eyes*, my dear, as well as your Lord Belford) and, in short, a sort of unaccountable something drew my attention to notice him.—I looked—I was angry with myself that I did so;—I, however, looked again.—I believe I sighed involuntarily—and, like Desdemona, wished

“That heaven had made me *such* a man!”

I even fancied he noticed your Harriet.—But what presumption,

to

to entertain so flattering an idea, even for a moment, when there were no less than three reigning celebrated beauties sitting by my side!—But what was my astonishment, on hearing my father accost him, with equal pleasure and surprise, as an English acquaintance!—They entered into conversation.—and, on my father's calling him *Villars*, surely, thought I, this amiable man cannot be the brother of a Miss Villars, with whom I entered into an intimacy some months before I left London; and who has been, ever since, my constant correspondent!

If this man, I thought, should prove to be my Emily's brother,—why, my heart must be irrecoverably gone;—for he has the cha-

rafter of an angel—a perfect Lord Belford, with whom I have often heard her fay he is intimate. It fo happened that I had never feen him with Mifs Villars, he being gone to an eftate in the North of England.

Again I stole a look at this amiable ft ranger—and, I think, exclaimed in my heart, “ If ever, “ Harriet, you change your ftate, “ *thou* art the man.”—To be brief, for I hear his carriage this moment at our door.

The opera was no fooner finished, than my good father faid, “ Mr. “ Villars, this is my daughter.”—He bowed low, with inimitable grace.—I curtfied—blufhed—and looked foolifh.—He offered his hand to lead me to my chair: neither

ther did he quit my *passive* hand till I was seated in it.—My father invited him to breakfast the next morning.—I had passed a sleepless night:—much such an one, my dear, as you did, after having seen Lord Belford the first time at the stile in the copse.—I leave you to search *your* heart for *my* feelings in a similar case.

To breakfast he came; and so inexpressibly agreeable did he appear, that he then perfectly completed the conquest he had begun.

He presented me letters from his amiable sister; and, to make short of my story, from that day he has been our constant visiter.—My father perfectly adores him; and *hangs* on his very words:—then wishes to me, in a whisper, that

that his poor Charles was half so good—in fact, Mr. Villars lives with us.—And now for the most important transaction of any I have yet told you.

A few days since, my dear, on my father's leaving the room, after dinner, and we were alone, Mr. Villars, in the most engaging—most delicate, and noble manner, made your poor confused Harriet an offer of his hand and heart.

When my tremor and blushes, on this occasion, would permit me to speak, I informed him I had no will but my father's, and to that I should implicitly submit.—With this he seemed highly satisfied.

Ah, Sophy, I would lay my life, my good father had been consulted before on this topic, as he had appeared,

peared, for some days, unusually *smirking*, and even *joking* with his Harriet.

Mr. Villars, with equal delicacy and tenderness, said he would leave me to *consider* the interesting subject, and acquaint my father with it.—"Ah, thought I, consider!—It is already *considered* by the *enthralled* Harriet."

My father, dear soul, is delighted with the offer.—The man so unexceptionable! His fortune noble!—He has now a clear ten thousand pounds a year, which at present is certainly a great match for me; though, as you know, my fortune is good; and if my disappointed brother does not marry (of which, alas! there are but little hopes) it will be large.—But let
me

me not, whilst I am full of the merits and virtues of this most excellent young man, dwell a moment on the sordid subject of money.

Villars, you will easily conceive my dear friend, is an accepted lover:—and, for the last few days past, we seem perfectly to *understand* each other.—We are much together:—he is the most delicate—the most tender of lovers.—And my father, the most delighted of parents.—He folds me to his bosom.—“ My Harriet (the fond
 “ tear of parental affection, stealing
 “ down his aged cheek, whilst he
 “ softly whispers) what an amiable man is this Villars!—the
 “ only man on earth I could have
 “ wished for my sweet child.
 “ His

“ —His father was my dearest
 “ friend.—We must have an *early*
 “ day, my dear :—I must have
 “ no *trifling* with *such* a man :—
 “ you are above all the *little* affec-
 “ tation of your sex, I know.”
 “ Dear Sir — (said I blushing)—
 “ why this hurry ?”

Only think, Sophia, of this
 dear old man talking of an *early*
 day !—No—no—it is quite suffi-
 cient that, at present, my lover
 cannot complain of my *indifference*.
 These men, Sophy, have a won-
 derful sagacity in finding *out* the
extent of our affections for them.
 —I shall not, however, to use an
 expression of my honoured father,
trifle with *such* a man as Villars.—
 On our return to England—why
 if,—if we *both* continue to think
 as

as we do at present, it is very probable I shall take him for better, for worse.—O my sweet Sophia, that *you* could be *united*, at the same time, to his invaluable friend.—Somebody taps at the door.

“ Mr. Villars, madam, and a letter*.”

It is—it is—from my Sophia:—I kiss the seal.—My lover *must* here give place to my friend: for I shall not stir till I have perused the dear voluminous contents.—Three—four—five sheets!—Thank you my dear.

* * * * *

I have perused the interesting—the affecting contents of my exalted

* Miss Woodley's preceding long letter.

alted friend's epistle—and am grieved to hear of this, Julia. — This entanglement to a mind so delicate as lord Belford's, is indeed distressing to the last degree.—How noble your address, on the wish you express to him, that “ *She* should “ be *His*. — That *He* should be “ *Hers!*”—My transcendent friend!—teach me to imitate such heroic virtue.

Unhappy Julia! — I have been shedding a tear for *her*, — for my *Sophia*,—and for poor *Lord Belford*. It may, however, please heaven to take the poor ill-fated Julia to itself:—otherwise I own I see not a ray of hope *. — Lord Belford,
my

* This most excellent friend, from a principle of great *generosity*, would not flatter her beloved *Sophia now* with hopes of her ever being

my dear, *must* esteem — *must* *pity* her sufferings. — But no more on the melancholy subject:—we will repose our anxious solicitude, on this trying occasion, in the bosom of that All-wise being, who best knows *when*, and *how*, to put in execution his everlasting purposes.

Oh, my friend, how do I long to know the sentiments of Villars on this matter!—He is Lord Belford's most intimate friend and confidant.—I am daily practising no small virtue, I assure you, in re-
 taking the wife of Lord Belford; as his affair with Julia was so critical and distressing.—In her own heart she was however convinced, from many little circumstances in his behaviour (as mentioned by Sophia) that Miss Woodley was the *only* woman in reality, whom Lord Belford loved; though his *honour* might make him adhere to Julia. She pitied his struggles of mind, but thought it would be cruel to tell Sophia so.

restraining numberless little questions, a woman's curiosity suggests, I *might* ask of my obliging lover: but no, I *scorn* the thought; I will not avail myself of the power I have in his faithful breast to make him betray the secrets of his unhappy friend.—But I must not forget that my lover is all this time waiting for my ladyship:—an excuse then for my concluding this, you will think is not necessary. We shall return to England soon—mean time, write, and believe me, more than ever, if possible, my exalted Sophia's,

Most faithfully affectionate,

HARRIET.

LET-

LETTER XXVIII.

Henry Villars, Esq; to Lord Belford.

Paris, Aug. 9.

AT length, my dear Belford, I have the pleasure of informing you I have received intelligence of Julia;—and *such* intelligence as will set that distressed—worthy heart of my excellent friend at *rest*, and at *liberty*.—But what will you say, that, whilst I have been endeavouring to give happiness to *that* heart of yours, I have lost *my own*—and that I am become as true a lover as

“ Ever sigh’d on a midnight pillow.”

Will you believe it possible that I, who have defied the whole sex, should now be the most attached to
a single

a single object?—But not another word of my *own* affair till I have explained yours.—It would be, indeed, cruel in me to keep you in suspense whilst I am running on with my raptures in that strain of enthusiasm so common to fond lovers.—To proceed to business then.

On my immediate arrival at Paris, I made all possible enquiry after Julia and the family—and was informed they had set out for Italy above a twelvemonth before. Hence arises, I imagine, your having no letters from the brother of Julia. I was sorry to hear of this tour, as it must necessarily prolong an account to you. That very day I most luckily received a visit from our old friend Sir Harry Trueman, who

who was setting out the next day for Italy.

Without entering, you may be convinced, into the *reasons* of my enquiry, I earnestly begged he would inform me, as soon as possible, of the particular situation of the family you wish to hear of, and if the sister of your friend was living, and in health.

Sir Harry gave me his most faithful promise he would act as desired:—and he has strictly kept his word.—You know he is indefatigable in serving his friends.—It is now five weeks since his departure from Paris—and he has been so *zealous* in the affair, that by this day's post, he informs me, that, on his arrival, he had no difficulty in coming at the particulars

culars of the family in question.—
But take his own account of the
matter, which you will find in the
following letter.

Sir Harry Trueman to Edward Villars, Esq;

Rome.

Dear Villars,

AFTER a journey delightful
as speedy, I arrived safe at this
famous city;—and want nothing
but yourself to compleat a most
agreeable party, who all live toge-
ther, and with whom I am one of
the number.

I have the satisfaction to say, I
can give you very *particular* infor-
mation relative to the young lady
of whom you desired me to make
a minute enquiry.—She is neither

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dead,

dead, nor married : but is, in fact, to all intents and purposes, as much lost to the world as if she were “*no more.*”—In short, to the astonishment of her family, she has flung herself into a nunnery—and taken the veil about ten days since.—Some say a disappointment in a love affair was the cause of this step :—others, that she unfortunately was acquainted with a Roman Catholic family, who wrought this change in her faith :—however that be, she is lost to the world for ever.—Though I never had any acquaintance with Miss Julia, yet the certainty of this event may be depended on. Three of the gentlemen in the house I reside, as well as myself, saw the awful ceremony performed.

To

To describe the particulars would exceed the limits of a letter, and, besides, would be wandering from the purpose: it is sufficient that I can inform you *how* the lady has disposed of herself.

A large party of us are just setting out to view the ruins of Rome.—You, my Villars, who are a lover of antiquity as well as myself, shall have, as soon as possible, an account of every thing worth your notice. I have already collected a few scarce medals, and other antiques, which I fancy will merit your approbation.—Adieu at present: I can only add that I am, my dear friend,

Your faithful

H. TRUEMAN.

F 2

Mr.

Mr. Villars in Continuation.

SO, my Belford,—at length, heaven has released you from the painful struggles you have so long endured between *gratitude*, towards an unfortunate lady, and a *real* passion of sincerest *affection* for the most lovely of women.—I congratulate you, my noble friend, on being *now* at perfect liberty; and doubt not, but as soon as all matters can be settled, you will make Sophia Woodley yours for ever.

And now, my friend, having set *your* heart at rest, do, prithee, indulge *me*, who am as much in love as yourself, to dwell a few moments on the delightful subject of my *own* passion.—Be not alarmed—
ed—

ed—I am not going to rave about sparkling eyes, rosy cheeks, and coral lips.—*My* angel is not remarkable for any of those *fleeting* beauties.—Not but I was, however, most certainly struck at first sight:—but the charms which wrought this conquest over my hitherto indifferent bosom, were the sweet humility—the tender languor—the modest benignity that seemed to *ask*, not to *command* admiration.—My little history is this.

After I had been a few days in Paris, I strolled one evening to the opera, and accidentally went into the box where the sweet girl was who has made so deep an impression on my heart.—I was instantly struck with a certain unaffected negligence, and the most bewitch-

ing air of tender modesty I had ever beheld.—She turned her head to see who it was that was sitting down near her, and most obligingly made room for me.—She blushed.—*That blush*, Belford, did my business.—I gazed—I was struck in a manner I know not how to describe :—and whilst this amiable girl was looking round to see *who* it was that attracted thus my attention, she herself was the object of it. From the peculiar humility of supposing her *own* person could not excite admiration, she fancied I was gazing at two very fine women who were sitting next to her. Those ladies, I soon found, by the disgusting airs they gave themselves, were *professed beauties*—a class of women I never was fond of. On

On turning my head, I observed, to my equal surprize and pleasure, my old and very worthy friend Mr. Granby, of whose merits, I believe, you have often heard me speak much.—My good friend at once recollected me; and our pleasure, in meeting so unexpectedly, was as great as it was mutual.—A secret wish arose in my breast, that the amiable girl, who had so much engrossed my attention, might prove to be his daughter, of whom I had heard much from my sister, who had given me letters for her, and who was her most confidential friend.—I was not deceived in my hopes.—This worthy man introduced her to me as his daughter, the moment the opera was over.

F. 4

I led

I led her to her chair ; and, by a kind of involuntary impulse, pressed her hand to my bosom.—To be brief, I was invited to spend the following day with my excellent old friend. My conquest was then compleated :—and it appeared no small recommendation in my favour, that I was the brother of the intimate friend of the sweet Harriet ;—for so is the mistress of my soul called.—I soon found I could never love another woman.—I received daily invitations from the worthy old man, and hourly discovered, in his lovely daughter, new charms for love and admiration :—but, as I have before said, those charms arise more from her delicacy, her winning sweetness, her tender softness of manner, than
from

from the too common attractions of a mere handsome face.—The kind of excellence she so eminently possesses, can only be explained by *negatives*. She is *not* affected—*not* bold—*not* slanderous—*not* envious—and her behaviour to her aged parent *not* like that we usually see in this age of refinement.—How was I charmed to behold this lovely girl (lovely in *all* the virtues) attending on his every motion ;—cherishing his returning health with her tenderest assiduities ;—singing to him, with the most exquisite taste, the finest Italian airs ;—playing on her lute and harpsichord ;—and, in fine, giving up her whole time, amusements, &c. to his disposal !

F 5 “ My

“ My Harriet (said the good old man to me one day, a tear glistening in his eye)—“ my little Harriet has been my chief nurse: “ —she is the delight of my life “ —and the solace of my latter “ days.”

I told the amiable young creature, soon after,—“ How happy, “ Miss Granby, would all these “ tender assiduities make an affectionate husband, which you “ bestow, with such unremitting “ care, on your worthy parent!”

“ I don’t know, Mr. Villars,” said she, with a sweet blush, “ whether I should find so much “ *real* felicity in my attendance on “ a husband, as I do in softening “ the pains and infirmities of this “ dear father.”

I caught

I caught her hand ; I pressed it to my lips ;—and was, that instant, going to declare my soul to her, when company came in.—I have, however, since, made a most full declaration of my passion, and have the extatic pleasure to say my offer is accepted.—In spite of all the blushing timidity and delicacy of this enchanting girl, she has declared I am *not indifferent* ;—has given me leave to *hope*—and that she will be mine on our return to England..

You will believe the circumstance of my being (and my father before me) so intimately known to the old gentleman, is a considerable help to me in this affair.—In short, I am, at this moment, the happiest of human
F 6 beings.

beings. My felicity is not a little increased too, when I reflect that you, my noble friend, are now left at *liberty* to give your hand to your charming Sophia.—May the same happy day unite us both to the amiable women we adore! This is my earnest wish.

Don't expect, Belford, to see in my *Harriet* any one mark of *personal* beauty:—but, instead of it, delicacy, sweetness, simplicity, truth and an elegance, in every form, that few women can boast of.—Your *Sophia* is a beauty of the first class:—and being also a *good* girl, I respect her highly.—With infinite pleasure I find our lovely women are strongly united in the most firm and tender friendship which ever existed.—What
will

will be *their* and *our* mutual joy in meeting !

But am I not unpardonable to be running on (what *prolix* fellows we lovers are !) about my Harriet and my own affairs, when I ought to consider, that you want this moment to be ordering your chariot and six, to fly to South-park, on the wings of love, to your Sophia !—O my excellent friend, see how your virtues are at length rewarded ! Extatic thought, that I shall too *see* the friend of my soul as happy as myself !—Adieu !—we shall very soon prepare to set out for England—and *then*, my Belford—But *words* are inadequate to describe our joys—*Imagination* must supply their place ?

I would

I would not wait to send this by the mail, but dispatch a special messenger, who has orders to travel day and night; so impatient am I to inform you of the fate of Julia.

Farewell—believe me

alternately yours,

HENRY VILLARS.

Ah! my friend, I have been obliged to unseal my packet, whilst the messenger waits, to inform you of a most shocking affair which has just happened.—The son of my worthy old friend here, is brought home very dangerously wounded—(a young man, I am sorry to say, of a most libertine bad character)—He was, it seems,
fur-

surprised by the vile Sir George B——, in the arms of his infamous paramour Gatty G——. The baronet had some time suspected their guilt—at length was fully satisfied of it—and took ample revenge—by instantly plunging his sword in her heart.—“ Die (said he) “ perfidious wretch!—who “ seduced me from the best of “ wives, and a helpless family!” —Hethen rushed furiously at young Granby, who, in defending himself, got so dangerous a wound that he fell.—Sir George, in a transport of fury, left the house.—Report says he has laid violent hands on his own life:—be that as it may—his miserable rival is just brought home in a deplorable condition. — Harriet — the sweet Har-

Harriet, fainted in my arms.—
Imagine my distress.

My good old friend, who from the horrid depravity of his son's conduct, could hardly expect but that he would end his days in some such dreadful rencontre, or midnight brothel, supported himself under this calamity better than I could expect.—The surgeons, who are now arrived, and have examined his wound, declare he cannot live many hours.—His sister—O how greatly amiable in her behaviour on this occasion!—will herself hold his dying head on her gentle bosom—will kneel and supplicate heaven for his forgiveness—forgiveness for a life, it is feared, dreadfully erroneous.

“ I can

“ I can *separate* (said the sweet Harriet, just now weeping to me)
“ my unhappy Charles from his
“ dissipated conduct—I *feel* that I
“ *have* in him a dying *brother*.”

The wretched woman who was the cause—but let me here check my pen;—her life has paid the forfeit of her crime, which, alas! was aggravated by many circumstances.—I pity her poor mother.

It is needless to delay sending this.—Mr. Granby cannot recover.—The unhappy man is now fallen into a delirium and high fever, in which his surgeons say, he may continue a short time, but that all human aid is vain.—This accident will rather hasten our return to England, than prolong our stay here.—

here.—Pardon me for detaining you so long from your Sophia, and believe me

Most faithfully yours,

HENRY VILLARS.

☞ The enraptured Lord Belford, on the receipt of his friend's letter, instantly set out for Southpark, where, in the most generous terms, he made a most noble offer to the lovely Sophia of his heart—his hand—and fortune.

We would here, gentle reader, endeavour to describe the tender scene betwixt these refined minds :—we would try to paint the warm rapture of Lord Belford's fond confession of love to the woman he adored :—of her amiable softness—
her

her confusion, &c.—but, to say truth, these kind of tender tête à têtes are too common in works of this nature to make the description necessary. Suffice it then to say, that Sophia, who had long loved this best of young noblemen to distraction, and who was above all affectation, *confessed* her whole soul was his.

Lady Worthy was instantly acquainted by these happy lovers with the affair ;—and as she perfectly doated on her dear Sophia, she was delighted, as must be imagined, with an offer so amazingly noble and unexpected.

Great was the pleasure, as may be supposed, our admirable Miss Woodley enjoyed, in hearing, from her lover, that his friend—the
friend

friend of his soul—was that *very* Villars who was soon to be united to the sister of her heart, the amiable Harriet. She wrote to that excellent young lady an account of her own happiness, and with what impatience she wished to see her return with her lover, &c. Harriet wrote an immediate answer of congratulation to her friend, on the prospect of that friend's approaching happiness; and likewise informed her that she was in a *fair* way herself of being *over persuaded* (as she called it) into the same state. Her letter is not inserted; as it chiefly dwells on the melancholy account of her brother's death, as also that of the wretched Gatty, &c. circumstances which the reader is already acquainted with.

with. We shall therefore content ourselves with giving only the following extract from it.

“ Ah, my noble friend, have I then at last found out the cause—the *glorious* cause of your flying from our house in London?—Yes, my Sophia, my poor distracted brother, in his last delirium, was continually raving on your name—and talking of nothing but of powders and potions that were prepared for you ;—of art and force to make you his ;—of carrying you off ;—of a letter he had dropt, which occasioned a discovery of the whole plot—and that you had elapsed, and were gone for ever.”

I really, my dear friend, looked on all this, and much more of the
like

like kind, as the mere effect of his delirium ;—but about an hour before his departure, he was quite calm and perfectly sensible ; when calling me to him, he, in broken accents said, “ Harriet, I am just
 “ going. — Pray for your poor
 “ Charles—His sins are great and
 “ many—O my tortured soul ! I
 “ will lighten my loaded consci-
 “ ence of *one* burthen at least.—
 “ Hear me, sister—I was solely
 “ the cause of that heavenly angel
 “ —that divine Sophia Woodley
 “ —being driven from you.—I
 “ persecuted her with an infamous
 “ passion,—nothing could have
 “ *saved* the lovely maid from ruin
 “ had she not—providentially I
 “ may say—discovered my arts.
 “ The consequence was flight—
 “ im-

“ immediate flight—to avoid the
 “ dangers that threatened her. And
 “ rather than involve the family
 “ she respected in distress—the
 “ distress of you, my Harriet, and
 “ of my afflicted father, she ge-
 “ nerously concealed the cause
 “ within her own breast.”—Here,
 casting his dim eyes on mine, he
 faintly exclaimed—“ Harriet, if
 “ the angel lives—say—I intreated
 “ her forgiveness with my dying
 “ breath.”—These were the last
 words he uttered.

O my Sophia, let me intreat your
 pardon for this miserable young
 man—let his *sister* plead his for-
 giveness!—Her tears, for this un-
 happy brother, will flow.

The remainder of Miss Gran-
 by's letter gives an account of the
 horrid

horrid end of Sir George B—, who continued, she says, raving some days, after the fatal act he had committed.—His innocent forsaken wife, was, however, it seems, the chief subject of his ravings : — and, though closely guarded, (for he had been seized by the hands of justice) yet he found means, by secreting a pen-knife, to put an end to his wretched existence, and was found dead, weltering in his blood.

A few weeks more passed before the arrival in England of Mr. Granby, his amiable daughter, and her happy lover :—which time was spent by Lord Belford at Southpark, where every preparation was made by the admirable Lady Worthy for the ensuing nuptials of her favourite

favourite Sophia, that elegance or taste could dictate.

A *prude* may possibly here remark, “Surely, this Miss Woodley was *soon won!*”—But let it be remembered, that for *her* to have practised the little arts of her sex, by affected delays of withholding her hand, where she had so long given her heart, would have been the height of a *prudish absurdity* of which our charming heroine was not capable.

Lady Worthy, who had heard the little history of Mr. Villars and Miss Granby, and who was charmed with her character (and it seems had also been very intimately acquainted with her mother) wrote a most genteel invitation to the above lovers on their return to Eng-

land, and another to the good old gentleman, intreating their presence at the celebration of the approaching nuptials of Lord Belford and Miss Woodley, and pleasantly adding, “ I hope it will not be the
“ *only* wedding celebrated the
“ *same day* at South Park.”

Accordingly, the worthy Villars eagerly seized the hint;—and ardently solicited his Harriet to make *him* as happy, on that day, as his noble friend would be.—Harriet *blushed* consent,—and the worthy old man her father was highly delighted with her ready compliance.

Accordingly, lawyers, milliners, and mantua-makers, were set to work.—But here, to avoid prolixity, we shall only say that this most
worthy

worthy party, when all matters on both sides were arranged, set out with a grand retinue for South Park, from London, about a week (for such was Lady Worthy's kind desire) before this double union of happiness was to be compleated.—Perhaps on their arrival at South Park, the world could not exhibit so compleat a joy as was then felt by these accomplished *persons* on their meeting.—But let Harriet speak for herself, which she does in the following letter.

LETTER XXVI.

Miss Harriet Granby, to Miss Eliza Selwyn:
South Park, Sept. 20.

HERE we are, my Eliza, safely arrived yesterday:—and if there is a heaven on earth, it

G 2

surely

surely may now be found in this sweet abode of love and friendship.

You desire me to be very circumstantial : but how is it possible for me to *describe* what is, in fact, *indescribable*? Shall I begin with telling you that after *such* an absence as ours has been, Sophia and I almost fainted in each other's arms at meeting?—You will say, it was lucky each of us had a lover at our elbow to receive us in *theirs*, in case such an accident *had* happened.—True my dear.

O that I had the pen of a Fielding to give you some idea of this angelic Lady Worthy! How sweetly polite—how even *affectionately* does she behave to the friend of her Sophia!—I can truly say, I never saw so much real excellence supported throughout,

throughout, in any character, as in this admirable woman. — What consummate resignation is hers!

She is, at present, confined to her apartment with a very severe fit of the gout in her feet; but she blesses God, and is all thankfulness, that it is not in her stomach. — She has besides a dreadful asthmatic disorder upon her lungs; but she is all gratitude to heaven that she enjoys the use of her mental faculties. — Don't you almost adore such a pattern of patience — *you*, who have so much suffered by illness?

Though she is not well enough to be removed from her apartment, yet she is able to admit one or two of our delightful party at a time there.

She has just been pleasantly tel-

ling me, that she wishes to see all my *fineries*, on the *approaching* occasion; for that, though she is an old gouty woman, she has *still* some remains left of the curiosity of her sex.

My father (who is now become as brisk as my Villars) is so charmed with the mistress of this sweet spot, that I should not be surprized if a *third* marriage (did the lady's health admit) should, in *due* time, take place.

Not one word yet have I said of lord Belford.—Heavens! what a man! what dignity—what sweetness of manners united!—and so handsome!—It is well for Villars our affair commenced before I saw this wonderful man.

Sophia, a little fly huffy, seldom
in

in her letters, I think, said much about his *person*:—it was his mind, forsooth—his manners and fine sentiments she used to dwell upon so much. He certainly is an uncommon fine figure:—but what has a man to do with such *eyes*?—I think they even surpass those of my favourite Villars.

What strange beings we women are! Sophia, and your Harriet, though a few weeks since would have given our caps to have been married to these lovers of ours, yet now the time is so near (*Monday* next, and this is *Tuesday*,) begin to feel very *oddly*—and are so *unsettled*:—one moment, we are flying to the harpsichord; — another, running into the garden for a little fresh air;—now humming half a song;

—then, “ Harriet, is Lord Belford, “ do you know, in the library?” — “ Nay, Sophia, I know not.— “ Have you seen Villars return “ from his airing?” Here we both sigh as if our hearts were breaking (though the very happiest of all human beings) — and then burst into a loud laugh at each other. In this foolish manner, do we spend our time when our lovers are absent, which, to say truth, is very seldom.

What delightful situations does this romantic spot afford!—It seems peculiarly adapted for the society of happy lovers.—The Hermitage—the painted alcove—the myrtle grove—all have alternately been witness to the vows of Belford and his

his Sophia — of Villars and his Harriet.

Sophia and I have begged hard, that the awful ceremony (I can positively think of nothing else) may be as *private* as possible:—but we are unheard—totally disregarded on this occasion.—On my conscience, I believe Lord Belford, and Lady Worthy—who have been laying their heads together—intend to have half the poor of the county of Somerset invited.

At this instant, from my windows, I see four, five, six, tents erecting in the park.—What a group of carpenters, joiners, and other workmen! Well—they surely have a right to do as they please:—a nobleman of twenty thousand a year is certainly not to be married like a

common man.—Now, I own, I should have preferred a little *snug* wedding, to all these pompous doings:—but—“No,”—say they—“we then should lose the ex-
 “tatic delight of making so many
 “hundreds of honest poor people
 “happy.”—Well, there is something in that.

The country is ransacking for pipes and tabors, to play to the young men and maidens, who are to form a kind of rustic ball on the large lawn, in the centre of the park—whilst a large wood, near the house, is to be finely illuminated in the evening, and, as the season is still fine, the gentry, who for twenty miles round, are to have an invitation, are to be entertained with a magnificent supper, and a concert.

The

The most principal vocal and instrumental performers are engaged on this occasion. A beautiful orchestra, erected on purpose, is designing by our good men *elect*, who are to have the whole management of this elegant amusement.—In sober truth, Sophia and I shall both be glad when all this pompous parade is over.

Lady Worthy, in her exalted generosity, has given ten thousand pounds to my sweet friend, on her marriage.—Lord Belford, as noble-minded as her ladyship, would by no means have it done.—“ For
 “ what purpose?” (said the admirable young man) “ I have settled
 “ now four thousand a year on my
 “ Sophia for her pin money—and
 “ her jointure will be more.” “ I

“ *must* (said the dear woman) have
 “ my *way*—the lovely girl shall
 “ not come to your lordship quite
 “ destitute.”

Lord Belford has presented his adored Sophia with a profusion of jewels:—and my beloved parent (blessings on him,—he loves the dear girl as his own child) has presented her with a most beautiful bracelet of your Harriet’s picture, set round with brilliants to a great value, and of most exquisite workmanship.

Our wedding-dresses (oh, that the day was over!) are white, the ground spotted with silver—sprigged with little branches of rose-buds and jasmine.—The trimming is equally elegant; being rich gauze flounces, embroidered beautifully

tifully with silver, and tied up with silver cord and tassels.—Sophia's habit and mine are to be exactly alike. As to caps, we shall not have any—our own hair, and diamond sprigs, will be only worn that day.

Villars has been much too profuse in the article of his presents to me.—What occasion had he to present me with such a *bouquet* for my bosom, and such a necklace, &c. &c. when I had already (having all my aunt Richley's jewels new-set in high taste) enough to deck out the proudest Nabob's lady in India?

“ If any thing (says the excellent Lady Worthy) “ will be “ wanting to compleat my happiness on Monday next, it is, that “ my

“ my dear daughter will not be
 “ present to assist as bride-maid on
 “ this occasion. How would she
 “ be pleased,” she did us the honour to say, “ to offer her services
 “ of attending on two *such* brides!
 “ Dear child! I hope to live to embrace her yet, before I die.”

○ If this daughter, my Eliza, possesses even one half of the virtues of her admirable mother, she will be a perfect pattern to her sex.

Somebody taps at my door:—it is my Villars.—“ May I be admitted for one moment?” he cried in a *persuasive* voice, “ I have something of consequence to impart.”

“ Come in,” said I, smiling. “ Well — what is your business of consequence?”

He

He caught my hand, and pressing it to his lips,—“ Do, my
 “ Harriet, come down, into the
 “ music parlour, we are going to
 “ perform a quartetto, and cannot
 “ do without you.”

“ I will,” said I, “ when I have
 “ finished another sheet to my
 “ Eliza.”

“ *Another* sheet!—O, heavens!
 “ I hardly have seen you this
 “ whole morning. — Upon my
 “ word, Harriet, when we are
 “ settled at Villar’s abbey, I shall
 “ put a stop to these long letters
 “ to your Eliza.”

“ A *stop*! Mr. Villars, to my
 “ writing to Eliza!”

He caught me in his arms, exclaiming,—“ Mr. Villars! Oh!
 “ Harriet!—all I meant was, that I
 “ shall

“ shall intreat your friend to let
 “ there be no occasion for *writing*;
 “ as I hope she will *live with us*, as
 “ often and as long as she pleases.”

Thus, my dear, did he turn, what he *first* said, into an invitation for your most agreeable company in person.

He was now got to the door, but instantly turned back to entreat me to recant calling him *Mr.*—and snatched another kiss of my passive hand.

“ Get you gone”, said I, “ I
 “ must be mistress of my time till
 “ Monday.”

“ Well! and so you shall,” said he, “ and every day after”—and down he went.

In good truth, my dear, these men are full as *simple* as ourselves
 on

on these occasions:—no one matter on earth, of importance, had he to communicate:—a mere little fetch of his, Eliza, to get me down into the parlour. The poet says, and truly,

“ This love,—this wayward love, makes *idiot*:
“ of us all.”

My father enjoys the thought of dancing with Lady Belford (his wish of old) on Monday evening—he is as gay, and as youthful as any of us.

This is, in all probability, the last letter you will ever receive from your Harriet *Granby*—but, whilst life remains, she will be always

Your truest and

Most affectionate

FRIEND.

P. S.

P. S. Another summons.—Well—positively, it is impossible, I see, for a woman, who is to be married in four days, to do one earthly thing without interruption. — Adieu—adieu.

LETTER XXVII.

The same, to the same.

(Dispatched by a special messenger.)

South Park, Saturday.

HOW pregnant with flattery and deceit, are our prospects of felicity in this world!—Two days ago all was joy and gladness at South Park, and now it is the seat of sorrow and despair!—From the happiest party on earth, we are become
the

the most miserable—Lord Belford—that best—that worthiest of men, is dangerously ill—is, we fear, dying.—The fatal cause of this dreadful affair is this.

Julia, it seems, is arrived in London, (he being *misinformed* as to her taking the veil)—and is in perfect health of both body and mind; and *ready*, as her brother writes, to accept the honour of Lord Belford's hand, in consequence of his former generous offer.

What a distress is this! we are all in a state little short of distraction. *Villars*, my poor *Villars*, *must* be *so*; as he says, he is the cause of all this misery, owing to his not *himself* going into Italy to learn the real fact, instead of trusting to another.

But

But ah, my friend! I have such a discovery to make!—Prepare for astonishment,

Julia is, we find, the dear—the long-expected daughter of the excellent Lady Worthy:—but who, on account of that Lady's constant ill health, has been abroad several years with a most worthy relation, and has constantly resided with her, as has likewise her amiable brother, the young Lord Worthy.

His good mother (as Villars informs me) has never known the least tittle of Julia's disorder of mind.—It has been most carefully preserved from her knowledge, and the cause of their stay so long abroad attributed to the account of improvement.

Lord Belford, it seems, had never

ver acquainted Lady Worthy with his intentions of offering his hand to her daughter, through motives of delicacy and tenderness, relative to her disorder, which must, in that case, have been discovered.—He judged (and wisely) that it was *not* very probable she *would* recover, and if so, that the affair had better die in oblivion:—and *now* having sufficient reason to believe she was entirely lost to this world, he thought himself at full liberty to give his hand to the loveliest of women.—But ah! what words can paint *her* present distress!—She has fallen into successive faintings, till a few hours since; when, I thank Heaven, she was relieved from them, and is now in a sweet slumber, during which I write.

How

How peculiarly distressing is her fate! *Obliged*, as she is, to her noble benefactress, can *she* be the obstacle to the happiness of Julia?—On the other hand, should Lord Belford live (which is doubtful) he will, I am convinced—such is the extreme honour and rectitude of his heart—offer his hand to Miss Worthy,—and there is no doubt but it will be accepted.—Gracious Heaven! what will, in that case, be the *trying* scenes the sweet Sophia will have to encounter!

Ah! Eliza, with what different ideas did I write to you my last epistle! what dreams of happiness—what flattering scenes of felicity presented themselves on all sides! How vain, alas! those preparations for our bridal pomp! how
vain—

vain—how futile the expected joy!

But my angelic friend is waking:—if possible, I will snatch a few moments by to-morrow's post, to explain farther how this dreadful event happened—I mean as to the *manner*;—the *motives* you already know.—I can no more at present,

But that I am

Your's, &c.

HARRIET.

LETTER XXVIII.

The same to the same.

South Park, Saturday noon.

LORD Belford, my Eliza, yet lives:—but a fever and delirium, which succeeded a fit which he

he was first seized with, are come on, from which his physicians apprehend the worst consequences.--Good Heavens! how heart-breaking are his affecting expressions! My poor Villars—what must *he* feel to hear them! every medicine this faithful friend administers:—and when the languid head of the suffering Belford is reclined upon his breast, the looks and emotions of my Henry exhibit a picture of the most exalted friendship, and would draw forth pity from the most unfeeling heart.

You will, perhaps, here say, that *my* situation, with that of the wretched *Sophia*, is much the same.—Perhaps it is so. The angel this morning, I think, seems more composed than yesterday, and is now in
a sweet

a sweet sleep, I therefore fulfil my promise of writing, as soon as possible, and hasten to give you some account in what *manner* this miserable affair happened.

We were all sitting round the tea-table on Thursday afternoon, *happy* as the most endearing love—the most exalted friendship could make us, when a servant entered, and presented Lord Belford with a letter, which he said was brought by a special messenger, from Belford Hall.

His Lordship, on opening it, I saw, changed colour; but Sophia, I believe, did not observe it, being then in the midst of her tea-cup preparations.—He arose, and left the room, I thought rather abruptly, and under some discomposure

of mind. We waited, I believe, a full quarter of an hour, when my sweet friend said, “ I wonder what makes Lord Belford stay so!”

“ I will go,” said Villars, “ and reproach him, for keeping us so long at our tea, when he knows too, that we are to have a little concert this evening, in the painted alcove.”

My poor deceived Villars left the room laughing—and about ten minutes longer elapsed—when my patience being quite exhausted at their stay, I arose and with a half smile, said to Sophia, — “ How neglectful and rude are these lovers of ours, now they think they are sure of us!”

I walked out through the passage,

sage, which leads to a parlour by
 the library, in which Lord Bel-
 ford retires to write; when the
 door that instant opening by a ser-
 vant, who was hurrying out of it,
 with seeming surprize in his looks;
 what a sight presented itself!—Lord
 Belford, pale as death, and sup-
 ported by my Villars, on the
 ground!—I screamed—I fainted.
 I was carried to my apartment
 (as was Sophia to her's, for my
 screams had drawn her from the
 drawing-room) in a state little
 better than distraction.—But not to
 dwell on this melancholy circum-
 stance, suffice it to say, that phy-
 sicians being called, they gave but
 little hopes of their unhappy pati-
 ent's recovery. If any thing they
 say, can save him, it will be the

goodness of his constitution, uncorrupted with the vices of the age.

Our grand point was, to keep the alarming cause of our present disturbance from the knowledge of Lady Worthy, which it was *not* difficult to do, as she never leaves her apartment. She has therefore only been informed, that Lord Belford has a fever, and that Sophia (as something must be said to *account* for her not seeing her dear benefactress) is so afflicted at Lord Belford's indisposition, as to render her ill also, but not dangerously so.

Thus we hope our innocent deception, in keeping her ladyship ignorant of the principal circumstance, will for the present satisfy her.—Indeed it could answer no one *good* end, that she should be acquainted with the *cause* itself. To

To add to our extreme embarrassment, the very evening the melancholy accident happened, another special messenger arrived from London, to announce the speedy coming of Lord Worthy and his sister to South Park.

Judge of the happiness of their excellent parent on this occasion, after so very long an absence!— Ah! little does that best of women imagine, that what is the source of joy to *her*, gives death to *some* in her hospitable mansion!

I just now looked in upon that dear lady.

“ Praised be heaven (said she in a kind of rapture) that I shall once
 “ more embrace my beloved children! Is not my other child, my
 “ Sophia rejoiced at this delightful

H 3

“ news?

“ news? Now, indeed, may my
 “ sweet Julia attend as *bride-maid*
 “ on the approaching joyful occa-
 “ sion.”

I could not stand this—I almost wept aloud; but luckily unperceived by the happy enraptured mother, and made a quick retreat into the apartment of Sophia. In my way thither, the door of Lord Belford’s room being just opened, my poor Villars beckoned to me to enter. I did so, for a few moments: but, O God! I thought I should have expired at hearing the heart-wounding ramblings of our dear, unhappy friend!—In a low voice he was muttering—“ Hora-
 “ tio—I will be *just*, and *true*.—
 “ See—see the poor distracted
 “ Julia! She comes—she comes
 “ upon

“ upon me!—Take her away:—my
 “ soul is all *Sophia*’s.—Cut—hack
 “ divide me—in heaven we will be
 “ united.—Ah! see, she smiling
 “ sits on yonder fleecy cloud, and
 “ bids me think on the distracted
 “ *Julia*!—Well—well—well.—Did
 “ she not take the veil?—why then
 “ appear to crush my joys?”

I could not bear these distressing
 sounds, but quickly made my way
 into *Sophia*’s apartment, when my
 heart was almost rent, in hearing
 the sweet sufferer exclaiming
 (though in a slumber soft like that
 of sleeping infants)—“ Is he quite
 “ dead—quite cold—and gone for
 “ ever?—I come, my love, I
 “ come.”

I sat by her pillow almost torpid
 with grief at hearing this;—but

soon after I had the satisfaction of seeing her awake perfectly composed, and seemingly refreshed. She desired to be raised in her bed; and with amazing magnanimity and calmness, asked me, if Lord Worthy and his sister were not yet arrived?—

I am called away, and will date again.

* * * * *

Monday Night.

They are come—they are come, Eliza.—You will easily conceive I mean Horatio and Julia.—Every possible precaution is put in practice to prevent the knowledge of their arrival to Belford, whose delirium and fever are rather abated;—so that there is, it seems, a hope
he

he may recover.—Then will his hand be given to the sister of his friend!—This—this, I fear, will be fatal to Sophia.—But I will not take up sorrow on interest.

I did not see the meeting of the best of mothers, and her long expected children:—but about an hour before this arrival, Villars, my father, and self, held a small consultation, relative to desiring Lady Worthy (for reasons she should know soon) not to mention, at *present*, the circumstance of Lord Belford's late intended marriage. — Villars, I imagine, will take the earliest opportunity of opening the whole affair to Lord Worthy, and of his being *misinformed*, with regard to his sister's taking the veil.

Are you not impatient to hear something of this Julia, who has caused us all this sorrow and disappointment?—Her person is certainly very far from being handsome:—She has, however, a countenance expressive of much sweetness—but there is a certain wildness in her eyes, which plainly indicates her head has been disordered.—She says she is in perfect health, but to me she appears pale and languid. I would lay my life, if Lord Belford recovers, such is his excess of honour, and refined delicacy, that he will marry her.—Heavens! what a distress is his!—To be so near the completion of his utmost wishes of felicity, with the lovely woman his soul adores—and now to lose her!—Alas! it is dreadful!

I really pity this poor Julia though she is the sole obstacle of my Sophia's happiness. I would indulge this kind of *sacred* compassion, as I hope it proceeds not from *ungenerous* motives.

Lord Worthy is a very fine young nobleman, both in figure and understanding, and his behaviour to his sister is amiable in the highest degree:—he watches her every look, as if fearful her *sad* *malady* should again make its appearance.

I am charmed with Lady Saxby, the worthy friend of these amiable young people, who has so tenderly cherished the unfortunate Julia, and in fact been a perfect mother.

—Ah! did her real parent know

H 6

what

what has been the situation of the mind of her child!—But *that* she never will, I hope.

Sophia remains perfectly composed—and Lord Belford is better.—They are both entirely ignorant of the arrival of our guests, and so we intend they shall remain till they have gathered more strength.—I enclose a copy of the fatal letter from Lord Worthy to his noble friend, which informed him of their arrival in England, and which has occasioned all our distress.—I am interrupted.

* * * * *

Tuesday Evening.

You will, in the midst of your pity for our miserable invalids, I know, bestow a sigh on your poor
Harriet.

Harriet.—Indeed my heart is extremely distressed:—and yet (hardest of all tasks) I am obliged to wear a chearful countenance before our *guests*. I am also obliged to do the honours of the table, by the desire of Lady Worthy who knows not what I feel; I am forced to suppress my tears—my smothered sighs—and to converse on the most trivial subjects, whilst my heart is almost bursting.

Adieu, my friend; it is not necessary to say how much I am your faithful

HARRIET.

Letter

Letter enclosed in the preceding one.
(As mentioned by Miss Granby, to her Friend.)

Lord Worthy, to Lord Belford.

London, Sept. 18.

MY DEAR ORLANDO,

AT length, I have the supreme delight of informing you, that Julia, Lady Saxby, and myself, arrived last night at Dover, and an hour since in town. I flatter myself that this information will still give you an additional pleasure, when I thank heaven I have to say my beloved sister has perfectly recovered her health, and, for this last twelvemonth, has discovered not the least symptom of her dreadful malady.—I repeat, I hope, this interesting circumstance will give you the happiness I wish it may—

may—when I can truly add, that her young and innocent heart is as much attached to my *friend* as ever it was:—and if *your's*, my Orlando, holds the generous *resolutions* you gave me *hopes* of on her recovery, she is *yours*. The subject, however, is too delicate to be discussed in a letter.

I am writing to our honoured mother the news of our arrival:—we shal soon be at South Park, and where you will, I am convinced, give us the meeting, if you still remember *us* with the affection *we* do *you*. We have been rambling through every part of Italy, by which means I fear I have missed your letters.—Adieu—for a few days only, I hope.—Lady Saxby is much your friend.—Her niece Julia
(the

(the finest young woman I have ever seen) to the equal grief and astonishment of all her relations, flung herself into a nunnery, and took the veil whilst we were in Italy; a ceremony we staid to see:—a circumstance this which has extremely affected me, as she was dear to my heart.—I long to pour my sorrows on this melancholy occasion into the faithful bosom of my Orlando.—But no more of this till we meet.

Julia, my sister, is sitting by me: I ask her whether I shall send you her *love*, or *compliments*.—Her blushes convince me she means the former, which I beg you will accept with mine.

Farewel, my best, my dearest friend! In a very few days I hope
to

AND MISS SOPHIA WOODLEY, 185

to see, and to convince you, how much I am your's,

Most affectionately,

WORTHY.

LETTER XXIX.

Miss Granby, to Miss Selwyn.

South Park, Oct. 30.

A Month, my Eliza, should not have elapsed without my performing my promise that I would write very soon; but I have so much upon my head, my hands, and my heart, that I trust you will forgive me. I say upon *my heart*; for tho' the angelic Sophia, (that appellation she surely merits for her most exalted beha-

behaviour in her trying situation) though she is better in spirits than I could have imagined, and even *tries* to be chearful, yet, I fear, and so do her physicians, that she has evident symptoms of a decline.—A low hectic fever, and other sad tokens of a slow-consuming consumption, make me wretched to an extreme.—But, heavens! what a pattern of resignation does she exhibit!—Indeed not more so than Lord Belford, and whose *fortitude* is astonishing.

The moment he was barely able to move, he insisted on seeing Sophia, previously to his having an interview with Lord Worthy and Julia, whom he now knows are in the house.

You will believe how much my
Vil-

Villars and I opposed his visit to Sophia—but in vain. She, sweet excellence, as *heroic* as her Belford, *endeavoured* to be, nay, *was* more *composed*, on this most delicate and trying occasion, than is in my power to describe. Never, surely, was so affecting a scene! The loveliest of women, pale, emaciated, her head supported with pillows in her chair, did not (most pitiable as was her appearance) afford a more heart-breaking view than poor Belford—who, supported by my Villars, entered pale, weak, and trembling.—The most rigid stoic would have wept at beholding the meeting of these lovers: it puts to defiance all description, or even the mind to conceive their distress.

Belford tenderly took the pale,
trem-

trembling hand of his (*once*) Sophia, and pressing it to his lips, in faltering accents enquired of her health.

“ I am better, greatly better, (said the angel) “ how is your “ lordship ? ” — To be brief, I soon found I could not stand this scene ; and indeed it was proper there should be no third person at *such* an interview.

Villars led me out into the next apartment, where we both freely gave vent to our tears.

My amiable lover then informed me, it was the determined purpose of his noble friend to give his hand to Julia, as *honour* demanded, by virtue of a prior engagement. In return, told my Villars, that the noble-minded Sophia, I was convinced—

vinced—such was her excess of delicate honour—would *never* marry Lord Belford so long as Julia remained alive, or single.

On our again returning to the two most exalted of human beings, I now and then caught the sound of Sophia's voice concluding a few sentences—in which were—“ No
“ more, my lord—an union was
“ *not good* for us.—Heaven thought
“ it not *proper*.”

After this interview, they both seemed apparently more *easy*.—Good God! what is their magnanimity!—What dignity of virtue do they possess! I really look up to them as to beings of a superior order. Surely, heaven has ordained that we are, in Lord Belford and Sophia Woodley, to behold a perfect pattern

tern of resignation and true fortitude, under the most trying of all earthly calamities. And indeed, I sometimes think that we ought not to repine at a misfortune, when it calls forth such amazing virtues as we see in both those dear sufferers.

Lady Worthy, by this time, as it must be imagined, has been made acquainted with the whole affair of this delicate entanglement. That most admirable woman, who has been a perfect *adept* in the tender distresses of love, from her own melancholy experience, enters into all the delicate embarrassments the affair must give to minds so superlatively virtuous.—She fights for her *adopted* child Sophia;—but, at the same time, it cannot be imagined she can carry her *disinterestedness* to so very
roman-

romantic a pitch, as not to wish her own child Julia might become Lady Belford.

The excellent Horatio is continually with his noble friend, and—But I am this instant summoned to dinner.—Alas! what is dinner to this interesting affair?—In a day or two, as new matter for my pen arises, I will write again.

* * * * *

Saturday.

YES, my dear, it is as I imagined.—Lord Belford, with the resolution of a *martyr*, has, through her brother, offered his hand to Julia—and, no doubt, she will accept it.—It will, however—it must,
you

you know, Eliza, be some time before their writings—the preparations for their nuptials can be got ready.—Oh, my heart! My poor Sophia!

Poor, did I say? rather let me give her the appellation of angelic. You will, indeed, think she merits it, when I say, that this evening, by her *own* invitation, Lord Belford and Julia drank tea in her dressing-room, to which, alas! such is the weakness of her frame, she could with difficulty be conveyed.—It was altogether a most distressing scene. Belford seemed struggling with his *fortitude*, as if he feared it would now desert him:—poor Julia looked confused:—but Sophia, noblest of women, even attempted *cheerfulness*.

But

But how was I utterly lost in amazement, at her transcendent greatness of mind, when, on Julia's shewing her a beautiful bracelet, of an antique she had brought from Italy! Sophia, whilst Lord Belford was sitting by, placed it on the arm of Julia—and with inimitable grace, took her hand, and giving it to Belford, said, with great energy,—“ Now, my Lord, look on
 “ this precious gem, now it is on
 “ the arm of Miss Worthy.—And
 “ thus—thus—I join your hands :
 “ —long may they be united in
 “ perfect happiness !”

Heavens ! what a woman is Sophia !— Belford trembled— Julia was surprised—and I could not restrain my tears.—But it was too

VOL. III. I much—

much—too much for that unhappy man.

Villars informs me, when he afterwards retired to his apartment, he betrayed the most visible marks of unusual perturbation:—he clasped his hands, exclaiming in a kind of agony,—“O bitter fate!—distressing angel—too much—too cruelly kind!”—

Indeed, Eliza, I will prevent any more of this for the future:—it is not, in truth, *proper* they should *now* see each other.—I mean, for the present, these interviews *can* do no good:—*may* be productive of much more calamity than what we have already experienced. Sophia calls poor Belford her *friend*—her *brother*:—but, to say truth, I never had any opinion

nion of these *nominal friendships* and *kindreds* in *lovers*—they are *dangerous* in the extreme. Does Sophia imagine she can, in reality, *support the actual union*, when the very *idea* of it causes her lovely bloom to fade—her piercing eye to lose its lustre—and her whole so lately fine frame to threaten an early dissolution?

* * * * *

I have just now been telling Lady Worthy, that I think change of air may be beneficial to my sweet friend; and that, if she approves my scheme, I will carry her to my father's seat in Gloucestershire.—She, poor Lady, vainly flatters herself, that a little time, air, exercise,

cise, &c. will soon restore the most estimable of women:—Ah! would it could!

On Monday, I purpose setting out with my dear patient:—Villars attends us; but returns again to his friend.—Do you know, Eliza, that he has actually solicited my *hand*, at the same time which is to unite Belford and Julia?—But no—I will be *his*, and only *his*:—but I beseech him to wait till I see the event of my poor Sophia's illness.—Forbid it friendship— forbid it even delicacy!—What, shall I enter on this state, with my Sophia dropping in her grave?—A few months—perhaps, weeks, may determine her fate—may close a life of every exalted virtue.

How

How lost am I in astonishment, when she is finding *beauties* in Julia—who, I think, has not much pretension to any?

“Don’t you think, my Harriet,” (said the sweet Sophia) “that Julia’s delicacy of manner is peculiarly pleasing?—How affable is her temper!—how easy her behaviour!—I admire the colour of her fine hair.—Poor young lady, I pity her extremely,—for I think there is still a melancholy in her eyes—and sometimes a wildness. — Gracious heaven, what must the sweet sufferer have endured to have brought on madness—distractiō! —Don’t you think her, my Harriet, infinitely amiable?”

O my Eliza, how distressing—how truly affecting are these her noble sentiments!

No one imagines the admirable Sophia to be so ill as, in reality, I am convinced she is.—Poor Belford vainly flatters himself that a change of air (joined with her strength of reasoning) will soon re-establish her health.—Vain hope! the blow she has received *will—must* be fatal:—the slower, perhaps, from her naturally good constitution.

As I purpose setting out with my sweet friend in a few days, this, in all probability, will be the last letter you will receive from me at South Park. Lady Saxby, who, as I before told you, came with Julia, and who is pleased to favour me
with

with her particular friendship, intends me the honour of her correspondence. Adieu ; and believe me

Ever your's,

HARRIET.

An interval now elapsed of several weeks ; but the letters which passed between the amiable Miss Granby, and her friend Eliza, are not inserted ; as they contain only a repetition of the increasing illness of poor Sophia, and of the preparation for the nuptials of Lord Belford and Julia.

The noble-minded Villars alternately spent his time at Granby Hall, and in endeavouring, by his presence at South Park, to support his excellent but unhappy friend,

in a scene, which was evidently more the effect of heroic, virtuous *resolution* than *inclination*. He studiously, that he might not more distress the mind of his beloved Belford, kept the increasing illness of Sophia from his knowledge, as much as possible.

At length, some little time before the above nuptials at South Park were to be solemnized, the incomparable Harriet, having had a consultation of physicians for the languishing Sophia, was by them advised to try the Hot Wells at Bristol. The distance from Gloucestershire being not great to that place, they, by easy stages, arrived there:—and from whence, we shall present the reader with the following letter to Eliza.

L E T.

LETTER XXX.

Miss Harriet Granby, to Miss Eliza Selwyn,

Hot Wells, Bristol.

AT length, my friend, I date from hence, where I am hourly watching the languishing sweetness of this flower—this angelic woman,—who, I can perceive, from day, to day, is hastening to that place

“Where such virtues *only* can be rewarded.”

She still remains the sweetest pattern of patience—resignation—and fortitude, surely that ever existed.

Imagine my distress, when with the serenity of angels, she often asks—“Well, Harriet, is the marriage-day fixed at South Park?”

“—Come, do not hesitate—tell

I 5

“ me

“ me all—is it over?—is the happy
 “ Julia gone with the best of men
 “ to their seat in Devonshire?
 “ Surely you believe me more *weak*,
 “ than in reality I am.—When I
 “ expire, Harriet, my last breath
 “ will be spent in imploring hap-
 “ pinefs on my poor Belford and
 “ his Julia.”

Her plaintive, feeble voice—her
 faint accents, wound my very soul.
 —I have forbidden a news-paper
 to be brought into the room:
 —She suspects my *motive* for this
 prohibition, and faintly cries, “Ah!
 “ Harriet, how *womanish* you think
 “ your Sophia!”

* * * * *

So far I had written yesterday;
 —to-day the sweet sufferer has
 fainted.

fainted twice.—Between the intervals, she has begged me to pray for her *release* :—and laments the *length* of time a death from grief occasions.—“ ’Tis *slow* (said she sighing) but *sure*.”—She is now just dropped into a soft slumber ;—may it be propitious, heaven grant !

A letter this instant is brought to me.—From Lady Saxby, I believe.—Yes—it is her hand-writing.—Black wax—good heavens ! I hope Lady Worthy is well !

Wonderful providence ! — how mysterious—how inscrutable are thy ways !—I am lost in astonishment.—O Eliza ! read the following letter.

I. 6. Lady

Lady Saxby, to Miss Harriet Granby.

South Park.

My Dear and Amiable Friend,

I Have a most melancholy event to inform you.—The poor, *ill-fated* Julia — my tears flow so fast I can hardly see to proceed — on Monday last — the very day on which she was to have given her hand to the most amiable of men — was alas! consigned to the cold arms of death!

The dear girl, a few days before, having walked too late in the evening, complained of a shivering, which terminated in the worst kind of putrid fore throat and fever. — Her constitution remarkably delicate, and rendered still weaker
from

from a severe illness, she long sustained, but, at length, sunk under this terrible malady.—The physicians, from the first moment of their attendance, gave no hopes. She languished for about three days—but perfectly sensible to the last moment.—She took a most affecting leave of Lord Belford—saying, “ I die, Orlando,—but I die content—may you be happy with” —some other—it is thought she would have said; but here her voice faltered—and she resigned her spotless soul into the hands of Him who gave it.

O my dear Miss Granby, I, who so tenderly loved this amiable young creature, cannot sufficiently deplore her loss.—But God’s will be done. Imagine our distress.

Poor

Poor Lady Worthy!—I fear this severe stroke will be fatal:—and yet, such is her transcendent piety, that she even bears it better than I could have imagined.

The dear lamented Julia was last night interred in that chapel which had so lately been consecrated for her approaching nuptials.

How full of reflection is this awful—this heart-rending subject!—But no more.—I trust she is at peace.—Farewel, my good young lady.—We sincerely hope Miss Woodley's health is improved by the salutary aids of air and exercise.—My best compliments and Lady Worthy's kindest love attend her, with all due respects to yourself.

I remain, dear Madam,

Your affectionate friend,

LOUISA SAXBY.

Miss Granby, in Continuation.

HEAVENS, Eliza! what a change is here!—How—how shall I be able to reveal this to my Sophia?—The prospect of happiness, should she live, that is now opening for her by the wonderful hand of Providence, may, if too abruptly mentioned, be too much for her weak state to sustain.—But oh! I fear—I fear my sweet friend is not to be restored by any earthly means:—indeed, I think it *impossible* she can recover.

Ah! who do I see?—my Villars, coming post—his chaise and four—he holds up his hand, to beckon me.—He is come, I apprehend, from his Belford, to *break* this interesting affair of poor Julia.—I fly to him

him—not another word can I write,
but that I am

Your's ever,

HARRIET.

Three months now passed, in which many letters were written from Harriet to Eliza, but they are not inserted, as it will suffice, we trust, to inform the *feeling* reader, who may possibly be anxious for the fate of the admirable Sophia, that Lord Belford, after a *decent* time, flew on the wings of love to Bristol, where he *soon* had the extatic joy of seeing his adored Sophia in a fair way of recovery.—Whether from his tender assiduities—for he even nursed and attended her himself, and gave her every medicine with his own hand—whether

whether (we repeat) his Lordship's tender cares, or the medicinal springs of *Bristol*, worked this happy effect, we will not determine;—but this we can say, again the lustre of the piercing eye of the lately-drooping maid began to shew itself:—again her fair cheek was re-animated with its lovely hue—in short, the sweet girl began to verify the following line of an admired author, that

“*Roses will bloom, when there's peace in
the breast.*”

Harriet's joy was extreme to see her much-loved patient not only almost restored to health, but also very near the summit of all earthly felicity, in being soon to be united to the most amiable of men:—who
ten-

tenderly (but *delicately*) pressed for an early day.—Had Sophia shewn *affectation* on this occasion, it would have been *preposterous*. A day was accordingly concluded on, and that happy period was likewise intended for, the very amiable Harriet, to give her hand to her fond and worthy Villars. These happy lovers soon set out with a grand retinue for Mr. Granby's seat in Gloucestershire, to celebrate these most joyful nuptials.—They, indeed, had received a most kind invitation from the excellent Lady Worthy, for that purpose; but, from motives of delicacy, the invitation was declined, as this noble-minded party thought it might possibly revive, in the bosom of a tender mother, her late grief for a beloved child;

the

the loss of whom she stood in need of all her christian fortitude to support.

These most joyful nuptials then were celebrated.—But the following short letter, from the happy Harriet, in the artless touches of nature, will better describe the particulars, than even the most laboured account we can possibly give.

LETTER XXXI.

Mrs. Villars, to Miss Eliza Selwyn.

Granby Hall.

ELIZA, the fate of your happy Harriet, and her Sophia, is now fixed for ever in this life:—within these two hours, my delighted parent has given the hand
of

of my fair friend to the amiable man who has so long adored her : —and my equally-*willing* hand he has bestowed on the worthy Villars. — Expect no connexion — expect no particulars at present. — We are all *four* of us so *sensible* of our felicity, after all our hopes, and fears, and “ *Hair-breadth* “ *'scapes,*” that I pray heaven we keep in our sober senses.

In the celebration of these *heart-felt* nuptials of ours, we have not consulted pomp, — shew, — or dress. — Indeed, the barely recovered state of my Sophia's health would have made the above forms ridiculous. — In short, we have had two the most *snug* little weddings you ever knew. — We, the two lady-brides, forsooth, were habited as plain as
sim-

simplicity could make us.—A white lustring polonese, a chip hat, and a little gauze hood, was the top of our finery.—I say *our*, for you may be convinced Lady Belford (O extatic thought, that I can call her so!) and her Mrs. *Villars*, were as much corresponding in outward appearance, as in their “*heart of hearts*.”

We propose staying a fortnight here in retirement: then we visit the excellent Lady Worthy:—and from thence, her amiable son accompanies us to Belford Hall;—where, I suppose, the generous Lord of that hospitable mansion will keep open house for all the poor for many, many weeks to come.

But

But this instant (affectation a-
vaunt!) my dearest *husband* begs for
admittance:—he snatches the pen
from my hand, and entreats my return
to the drawing-room.—Well,—you
know, I have just vow'd *obedience*
at the altar,—so must submit to my
lord and master.—Not more then
can I say, but that

I am,

most sincerely your's,

HARRIET VILLARS.

The

The CONCLUSION.

THUS, gentle reader, have we at last, united the heroes and heroines of this little history: who, perhaps, by their magnanimity in sufferings, and *true* fortitude, more justly merit that appellation than all the Alexanders and Mark Anthonys which ever existed.

Lady Belford, in her present exalted sphere, now excelled as much in the virtues of generosity, and beneficence, as she had before done—in her adverse state—in the humble, but equally amiable graces, of humility, and resignation.—Lovely, in the highest degree, was the behaviour of this pattern to her sex

sex towards every individual in Devonshire, who in her *poverty* (as she called it) had afforded her an asylum.

On the arrival of this noble party at Belford Hall, good Mrs. Hill, at the *Elms*, was almost petrified with wonder, and almost wild with joy.—She longed to see, and to welcome the dear Lady, as she called her, to the Hall:—and yet her innate modesty, and that amiable simplicity, in which she had been bred, forbade so *bold* (as she phrased it) a liberty:—but Lady Belford, with that sweetness of manners, peculiar to herself, soon after her arrival, sent for the above amiable young woman, who had so tenderly cherished her in adversity:—but who, on appearing before

before her Ladyship, stood aloof at an humble distance.

“What” (said the loveliest of women, rushing into her arms) “have you forgot, Mrs. Hill, “your poor Polly Martin?”—whilst tears, of unfeigned delight, stole down the cheek of each:—*such* tears, that possibly *few* fine ladies have experienced. Sophia then enquired most tenderly after those dear little ones, to whom she had been a most careful nurse:—they were introduced;—but eyed her askance with the sweet blushes of an innocent shame, to appear before *such grand* company, and could hardly believe their *own Polly* was now so *great* a lady.

Nor were that poor, honest couple, John Plowden, and his dame, forgotten, whose little thatched cottage, on the first arrival of our *then* distressed heroine, had afforded so kind a shelter:—and who had in fact recommended her to the Elms—from whence the hand of providence had led this excellent lady to her present exaltation.

Lord Belford insisted, in the generosity of his noble heart, to place the good old folks in a farm.

“ We crave your honour’s pardon” (said the honest man) “ we would not leave our cottage for a palace:—wealth brings care, an please your honour:—but if
“ we

“ we *must* be obliged to your lord-
 “ ship, the only boon we ask is,
 “ a cow, and a few sheep ;—and,
 “ —but I don’t know how to ask
 “ it—the little green meadow, at
 “ the side of our garden, where
 “ my dame could sit and spin, un-
 “ der the old walnut-tree, whilst I
 “ tended these same sheep — an-
 “ please your honour, would make
 “ us happier than all the kings and
 “ emperors in the world.”

Lord Belford, delighted with
 the honest old man, most amply
 gratified his very moderate request,
 accompanied with a purse of fifty
 guineas.

Lady Belford had scarcely been married a month, when the almighty disposer of all events still gave her greater powers of exercising her benevolence, and unbounded charity:—she, being by the death of her little nephew (or at least of the child who was said to be such) the indisputed heiress of the Woodley estate (a clear four thousand *per annum*) its beautiful seat, parks, &c.

The amiable Lady Worthy soon joined this delightful party at Belford Hall: as did the accomplished Miss Selwyn; the friend and correspondent (throughout these volumes)

lumes) of the admirable Mrs. Villars.

The beauty, the sweetness of manners, and refined understanding of the young and blooming Eliza, soon convinced Lord Worthy that a man *may* love *twice*, which his lordship had most strenuously asserted was absolutely impossible (since his Italian Julia had taken the veil) he *could*, or *should* ever do: but he soon found, in the words of that great master of the human heart, Shakespeare,

“That *beauty* is a *witch*, against whose charms
“*Faith* melteth into blood.”

In fine, Lady Worthy, happy in her son's intended choice, his lord-
K 3 ship

ship was shortly after united to the fair Eliza, who both afford a shining example of every virtue which can adorn human nature.

These three noble pairs, alternately spend their time at the delightful seats of each other:—by which means their generous bounty to the poor, for many miles round each, is as great a blessing as it is unlimited.

The good old lady Worthy insists on *her* Sophia, (for so she still fondly calls her) and her charming friend Mrs. Villars, to spend three months, every summer, at South Park—and they have promised so to do:—but, at present, these two
in-

inseparable friends are confined to their apartments :— Lady Belford having just presented her Lord with a fine boy ;—and Mrs. Villars her happy husband a lovely daughter.

May our little history afford this *plain*, but *useful*, lesson (which can never be enough inculcated) that however deep our present distress may be—however plunged in difficulties, which to our short-sight, may appear insurmountable, yet, by patient resignation, and humble submission to the will of heaven—and by nobly sacrificing our passions, or interests, to our honour, and duty (as in the case
of

of Lord Belford, and his Sophia) let us doubt not, but that the mighty hand of providence will, in its own good time, never fail to reward suffering virtue with its choicest blessings, by means unseen by human foresight: and let us rest satisfied in that admirable sentiment of our excellent poet, Mr. Pope, comprised in these four words:

“WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.”

F I N I S.

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